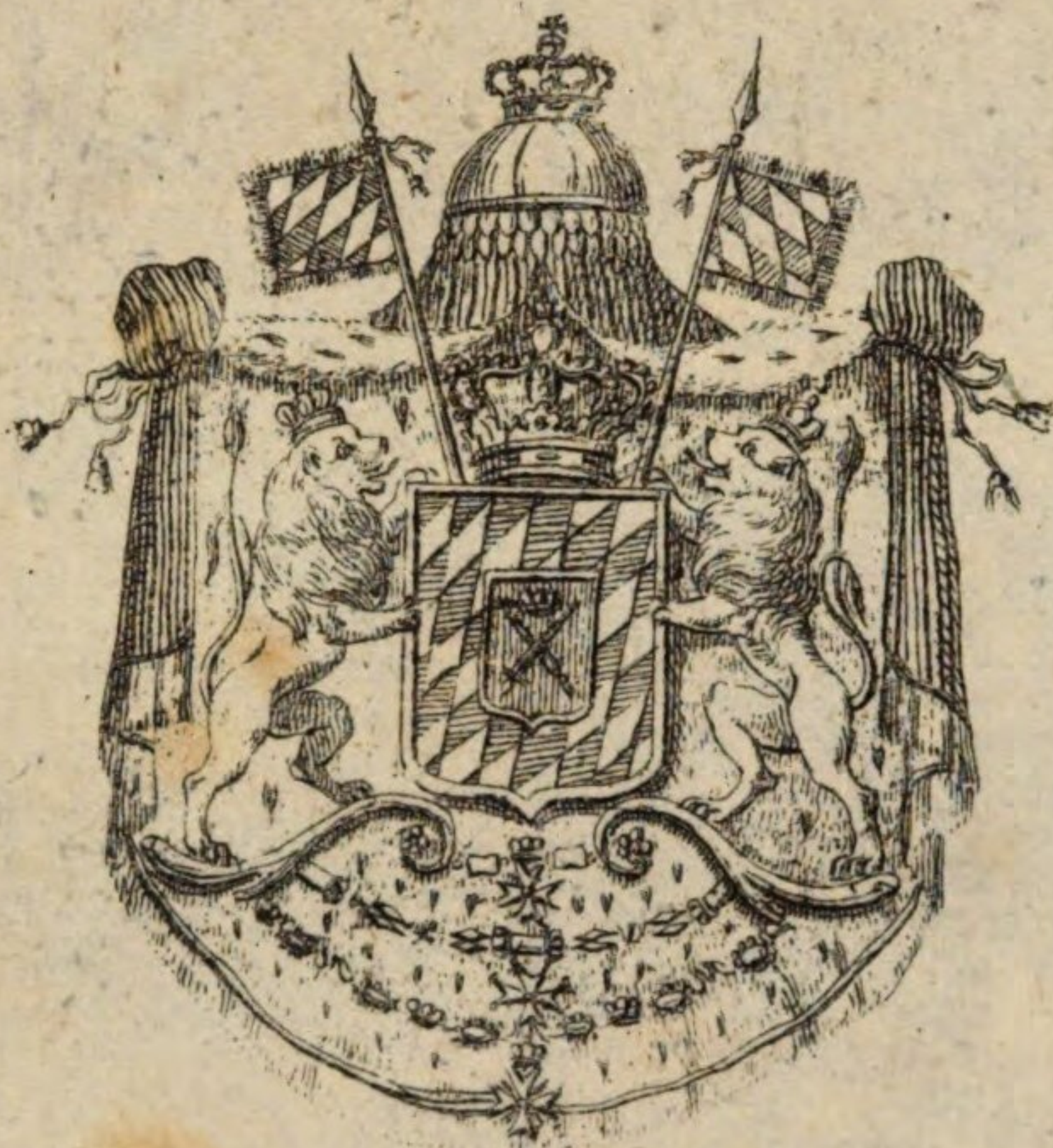






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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
GENUINENESS
OF THE
ANCIENT BRITISH POEMS
OF
ANEURIN, TALIESIN, LLYWARCH HEN,
AND MERDHIN,
WITH
SPECIMENS OF THE POEMS.

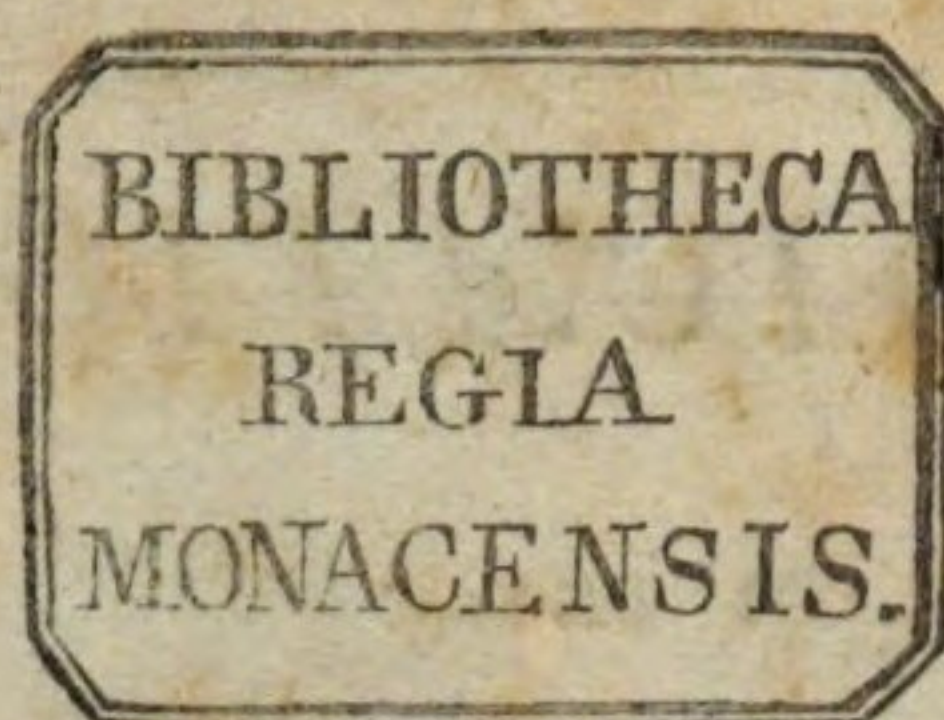
BY SHARON TURNER, F.A.S.

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P R E F A C E.

THE genuineness of these poems has been publicly impeached by Mr. Pinkerton in his preface to Babour, and in a Review (not distinguished by the urbanity of its style or the correctness of its criticism) of my Anglo-Saxon History, published in the Critical Review for January, 1800. Mr. Malcolm Laing has also attacked them in a note to his Dissertation on Ossian's Poems, and some other gentlemen in private societies have also depreciated them.

The hostility of men, respectable for their literary talents, could not be continued against these poems, without much injury to their credit. It was, therefore, necessary to abandon them
to

to undeserved neglect or to vindicate them from the objections of their enemies, by a series of legitimate reasoning.

Having quoted them in the first volume of the Anglo-Saxon History, I was charged with gross credulity for accrediting them. Thus, unexpectedly involved in the controversy, I hope to be pardoned for intruding on the public with a publication on the subject. As I am an Englishman, I have no patriotic prejudice in their favour; but as an amateur of literature, I think them deserving of attention, and for the reasons which I shall proceed to state, I believe them to be genuine.

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

GENUINENESS OF THE

ANCIENT BRITISH POEMS.

IT is not unknown to the curious reader, that there are Welsh poems extant, which are stated to have been written by Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin, who lived in the sixth century. They have not escaped the suspicion of imposture, and many gentlemen have desired to be informed of the nature of the evidence on which they can be ascribed to authors so remote.

In this state of the public mind, it may perhaps be acceptable to literary men, to have

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the evidence in their favour, and the arguments by which they may be supported, fairly and dispassionately stated.

Many persons are better qualified for this office than myself; but as no one has yet particularly discussed the subject, I think I shall not impertinently apply some part of the leisure of the summer to its consideration. I quoted these poems, in the History of the Anglo-Saxons, because I thought them genuine; and the objections which this occasioned, have induced me to investigate the question as carefully as I was able. I will adduce with temper, and I hope with fairness, the evidence in their favour; and I will notice, in the proper places, all the arguments which I have heard against them. The cool and steady judgment of the public, which, after due reflection, never decides wrongfully between contending partizans, will determine the dispute.

The subject is unquestionably important. So much gloom rests upon the history of our island, during the period of the Saxon invasions, that the discovery of any authors, contemporary

temporary with that period, could not but be a valuable present to our curiosity. If these poems be genuine, they must furnish very interesting matter for the contemplation of the antiquary and the philosopher, even although their rude and martial strains should want those elegancies which delight the refined taste. Their general subject is, above all others, interesting: it is the struggle of the ancient Britons against the invading Saxons. They describe the battles of which all other memory has perished. They celebrate many patriotic warriors, whom time has almost defrauded of their fame. They exhibit curious, and striking, manners. They throw much light on the history of their æra, and they contain many passages which poets need not disdain to applaud. Indeed the celebrity which they have for ages enjoyed among their own countrymen, is an ample testimony of their genius.

If they had no other merit, they would be highly valuable for their language. What can gratify the philologer more than to have such specimens of the language of the ancient inha-

bitants of these islands? The language of the British bards, in the sixth century, must have been substantially the same with the language of the Britons who withstood the valour of Cæsar, and of course must present us with a venerable image of, perhaps, the earliest language that appeared in Europe. The philosopher who loves to trace the progress of intellect, and to observe its original affociations, and selected forms, in those barbarous times when the arts of mental cultivation were little understood, will highly appreciate the works of men who flourished at a period so early and so singular. If these poems be genuine, they are of the greatest value; and it cannot be a matter of small moment, to inquire if they be genuine.

These ancient poems, and their advocates, have been arraigned with a severity which I think very blameable. Whatever latitude may be given to the angry feelings in political controversy, where the magnitude of the contending interests becomes an apology for occasional warmth, there can be no justification of asperity on a point of antiquarian doubt. Indeed any
anger

anger between literary men, is not only unbecoming, but absurd. The world takes no part in their animosity. It will always form its own conclusions, not from the language, but the facts of the controversy. We who now read with disgust, the virulence even of a Milton, or a Scaliger, and who turn, with abhorrence, from the malignity of a Schioppius, cannot doubt but that our inferior works will be as revolting to the taste of our posterity, if virulence contaminate the pages, which ought to be sacred to fair statement, to forbearing civility, and dispassionate reasoning. It is a disgrace to no one to disbelieve the genuineness of the ancient Welsh poetry, if the evidence does not satisfy his judgment; nor can they be culpable for accrediting it, who think that the balance of probabilities is decisively in its favour.

These poems have not become known to us under the circumstances which attended those of Chatterton and Macpherson, or the Pseudo-Shakespear. They are not works now starting up suddenly for the first time to our knowledge. They do not owe their discovery to

any individual. No friendly chest—no ruinous turret—no auspicious accident—has given them to us. No man's interest or reputation is connected with their discovery. Their supporters are therefore, at least, disinterested. They have been in existence, and have been known to be so for many centuries, but they have never been brought forward to answer any purpose of private interest, or national vanity. Their countrymen have long fondly cherished them, but have been, till very lately, even censurably careless whether any of their neighbours either knew or respected them. Such indifference as this, about documents so curious, never yet has attended any forgery. Nothing can be more favourable to their cause—nothing can more strongly mark the difference which subsists between these poems and all those writings which are known to have been fabricated.

It may be reasonably asked, Why, as they have been so long in existence and credit in Wales, have they not become more known to the world before our time?

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The observation applies, however, not to these bards only, but to all the Welsh literature ; for although that has been long in existence, though above 1000 MSS *. of its different branches are still in being, yet which of them has been consulted or spoken of by Englishmen ? The Welsh have poems, romances, chronicles, grammars, treatises on music, agriculture and astronomy, theological, ethical and medical works of different authors, from the time of the bards, to our own, which are nevertheless as little known in England, or in Europe, as the compositions of the Chinese.— With the writings of most of the nations on the continent we are familiar ; but we have permitted ourselves to be ignorant of the literature of our neighbours, who are only parted from us by the Severn and the Wye. Has this been our fault or theirs ? Let us inquire.

Almost all the men who cultivated literature in Wales before the 16th century, unfortunately for our indolent curiosity, wrote in their

* This number of MSS. of course includes many transcripts of the same compositions.

native language. The bards of the 12th, and succeeding centuries, whose genuineness no man affects to doubt, their chronicles, their clergy, and their authors on other subjects, did not extend their views of fame beyond their petty principality, and therefore composed in Welsh. But the Anglo-Normans, and their descendants, would as willingly have studied Coptic as Welsh. Such, at least, was the opinion of the *polished* and *elegant* Anglo-Saxon about it, that in one of their grants of land in Cornwall, the King, after mentioning the Saxon name of the place, says, “which the inhabitants there call *barbarico nomine*, by the barbarous name of Pendyfig *.” This barbarous name was Welsh !

The unvarying neglect of this language, and its authors, descended from the Anglo-Saxons to the Anglo-Normans, and of course the knowledge of Welsh literature was confined to the Welsh counties.

It is a truth, which certainly casts some dis-

* MSS. Cott. Lib. Claud. B. 6. p. 38.

grace on our national curiosity or our candour, that unless Welshmen had themselves introduced their authors to our notice, we should to this day have been as ignorant of their literature as we are of the MSS. and monuments now existing in Great Tartary. The curious and interesting catalogue of the Welsh MSS. which Edward Lhwyd made from personal inspection, and printed in his *Archæologia*, first made Europe acquainted with the nature and extent of his countrymen's compositions. It is greatly to be lamented, that Lhwyd was patronized so meanly, and that misfortune was permitted to shed so much evil on his life. He was one of those few men, whose literary exertions have merited the liberal gratitude of their country. He was one of the many who never experienced it.

The political circumstances of the Anglo-Saxons having driven the Britons into Wales, and of perpetually warring with them afterwards, created so much hostility and hatred between the two nations, that each undervalued the other, and despised both its language and its literature. When these envenomed feelings abated,

abated, the habit of neglect long survived the hostility.

The Welsh language is also peculiar and original. Men who have enjoyed a classical education, pass with ease and pleasantness to French, Italian, or Spanish. But the Welsh is so unlike the other languages of Europe, and its mutations present so many difficulties, or at least the appearance of them, to a learner, that even antiquaries have been, and are, deterred from acquiring it. Interest, ambition, and fame, which have led some to explore the Sanscreeet, and the Chinese, have been found so little allied to any proficiency in Welsh knowledge, that even these Syrens have never influenced any to do that justice to Wales, which strange and distant nations have frequently obtained. Welshmen, on the other hand, have been too proud, and too recluse. They did not forgive the seizure of their country, and they despised too much the warriors who acquired and kept it. Hence what Englishmen would not learn Welsh to know, the natives of the principality would not translate.

Better feelings have at last predominated.

Some

Some individuals appeared in the last century, who wished the literature of their country to be more diffused. The idea was too novel to be much attended to. A spirit of literary patriotism has begun, however, to diffuse itself, and has reached many individuals, whose exertions have contributed to put the public in possession of the Welsh remains. Among these the gentleman who has nearly published a new Welsh dictionary, who has given us a translation of the poems of Llywarch Hên, who edited those of David ab Gwilym, and the Cambrian Register, and what is still more important, who has essentially contributed to the preservation and notoriety of Welsh literature, by editing, with two other Cambrian patriots, its most ancient and important remains, is well entitled to our praise.

By this publication, entitled “The Myvyrian Archæology of Wales, collected out of ancient MSS*,” the public have, for the

* Printed in 1801, in two volumes, large octavo. The volume of poetry contains 584 pages of double columns. The other, of prose, extends to 628 pages.

first

first time, before them, in a printed form, the Works of the ancient Poets, whose genuineness I hope to vindicate, and those of the succeeding poets, down to the end of the 14th century. These occupy the first volume. The second contains their curious historical triads, some genealogies, and historical chronicles. It is stated, that other pieces of their literature will in due time appear.

The Proposition, which is the Subject of this Essay, stated.

The proposition, which I shall proceed to support is this :

“ That there are poems now existing in the
“ Welsh, or ancient British language, which
“ were written by Aneurin, Taliesin, Lly-
“ warch Hên, and Merddin, who flourished
“ between the years 500 and 600.”

The poems, which have been ascribed to these authors, occupy the first 153 pages of the Welsh Archaology, and are entitled, “ The Cynveirdd,” or the most ancient Poets.

The

The great poem of Aneurin is intitled the Gododin. Its subject is the battle of Catteraeth, in which he fought against the Saxons. He was a British chieftain in some part of the North, probably among the Ottadini, in the sixth century. The Saxons conquered in the battle with such slaughter, that Aneurin was one of three who were the only survivors of the distinguished men who led the Britons to the conflict. The poet was afterwards killed treacherously by one Eiddyn.

His poem contains 920 lines, of varied measure, but all rimed. Its object appears to be to commemorate the brave patriots who were engaged in the battle. Another poem on the months also bears his name; and of two poems entitled, "The Incantation of Maelderw," that in some MSS. have Taliesin's name, it may be doubted if one be not more properly referable to Aneurin*.

The poems of Taliesin are on different sub-

* See them in *Archæology*, p. 61 and 84. The poem on the months is after the Gododin, p. 14.

jects. The most important, are those which concern the battles between the Britons and the Saxons ; and these are the poems for whose genuineness I argue. He lived in the sixth century. His principal patron was Urien, king of a little state called Reged, of which the position is not certain. To this king ten poems are devoted, which celebrate his patriotic battles. There are also elegies of Taliesin, on other British warriors, as Owain, the son of Urien, Ercwlf, Madawc the bold, and Erov the fierce ; Aeddon of Mon, Uther Pendragon, and Corroi, the son of Dairy. His other poems are of less value. Some are unintelligible, because full of Bardic or Druidical mysticism, and perhaps some are ascribed to him, of which he was not the author. These, however, may, from internal evidence, and other circumstances, be discriminated by a careful and intelligent critic, well acquainted with the language. All that bear his name have been printed in the *Archaiology*.

Llywarch Hên, lived both in the sixth and seventh centuries. He was a prince of Argoed,
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in Cumberland. He visited the court of Arthur, and consumed his most vigorous years in opposing the Anglo-Saxons. As they advanced, he took refuge with his surviving children in Powys, and shared in the wars of the hospitable Cynddylan. Most of his poems are of historical utility. One is an elegy on Geraint, a Devonshire leader—another is an elegy on Urien, king of Reged—another on his patron Cynddylan—another on Cadwallon, the son of Cadvan. The poem on his own great age, and the fate of his children, who perished in the wars, is very interesting.

Merdhin the Caledonian, also surnamed Wyllt, or the Salvage, has not left much. He was taught by Taliesin, and of course lived in the sixth and seventh centuries. His Afallenau, or a Poem on an Orchard, which had been given to him, contains some allusions to the events of his time, which are curious. As this bard had the reputation of a prophet, there are some things ascribed to him which he never wrote, and some which he did write have been

been interpolated*. The dialogue between him and his sister is obviously surreptitious ; nor do I accredit all the Hoianau. Judicious criticism will easily detect the spurious poems.

I will now state the course of argument which I shall adopt to prove the proposition above mentioned, and I hope to make it as satisfactory as the case will admit. The reader will in justice to the subject, recollect its antiquity, and therefore neither expect the unerring precision of mathematical reasoning, nor the accumulation of evidence overpowering doubt, which might be adduced, if the authors in question had been modern poets.

The evidence in favour of any ancient author may be divided into two sorts—The external, and the internal. I shall first consider

THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE.

I will begin this by mentioning

1st, The old MSS. which now exist of these poems, and then shew,

* Giraldus expressly states this---his words will be quoted presently.

2ndly,

2dly, That these poems, or some of them, and their authors, have been mentioned, or alluded to by a series of bards, whose works still exist undisputed, from before the 12th century, to a recent period.

These facts will shew that they are at least no modern forgery, and that they were in existence in the twelfth century. The question will then become this—Were these poems existing genuinely in the 12th century, or were they then forged?

To decide this great question, it will be important to inquire,

3dly, If there were any bards among the Britons in the 6th century; and,

4thly, If such bards as Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin, then existed.

If we shall find that the Britons had bards so early, and in particular these individual bards, we shall have gained one step in our researches, and this step will not be an inconsiderable one.

But as the question will turn on the probability of these bards leaving MSS. as well as on
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their existence, it will be necessary to consider,

5thly, If any writings of a century so remote as the 6th have come down to us.

6thly, If the Britons had then the art of writing.

7thly, If the writing of any other Briton of this period, whose genuineness is undisputed, has come down to us.

Should these questions be satisfactorily answered in the affirmative, another step in our progress will be gained. If the genuine composition of any other Briton of this age has survived to us, so might the works of these British Bards.

I think I shall make a third advance, if I shew from incontrovertible authority,

8thly, That in the 12th century there were writings of old British Bards extant, which were *then* called *ancient*.

This chain of proofs appears to me to make the external evidence as strong as the case will admit. I submit that we receive the poems of Homer as genuine, on a degree of external evidence not more satisfactory.

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I presume that I shall have acquired at least a right to say, that after this series of facts in favour of these poems, nothing but their internal evidence counteracting them can warrant us in discrediting them. On

THEIR INTERNAL EVIDENCE,

I will endeavour to state,

1st, That the subjects of this poetry could answer no purpose of interest in the 12th century.

2ndly, That their subjects were the most unlikely of all others for a forger to have chosen.

3dly, That Arthur is spoken of in a manner inconsistent with the supposition of forgery.

4thly, That the subjects are such as, if genuine, might be expected from their real authors.

5thly, That the language is not obvious to modern Welshmen, and has there-

fore an important feature of the language of the times to which they pretend.

6thly, That their historical allusions are true.

7thly, That the manners they express are consistent.

8thly, That the form and composition of the poems suit the period.

I shall then attempt to answer the main objections, which have been urged against them; and conclude with shewing that the forgery could not have been practised without detection, in those times; that there is nothing extraordinary in the fact, which this essay is directed to substantiate, that these poems are attested by an unvaried stream of national belief, and that any scepticism about them has been of recent origin.

“ THE OLD MANUSCRIPTS NOW EXIST-
ING OF THESE POEMS.”

If there had been no ancient MSS. of this poetry to have produced, it would not alone have been a conclusive argument against it, because the ancient MSS. are usually superseded by subsequent transcripts; and because men often admit works to be genuine, without possessing very ancient MSS. of them. Of the numerous Greek and Latin works, which we possess, how few are there of which very ancient MSS. can be adduced!

Time and accident consume MSS. as well as buildings and men. Old copies decay or are lost, and new ones succeed. When families die, their libraries become dispersed, and many a MS. and book, which were once hoarded as treasures, have mouldered on stalls, or have been used as waste paper. Sons very often inherit neither the taste nor the knowledge of their fathers; and they who squander the estates of their ancestors, are not very likely to be careful of their books.

A great curiosity has, in the last century, been cherished for the oldest MSS. of authors. In former times, however, there was no such anxiety to preserve ancient transcripts. Some MSS. were preferred to others for the costliness of their decorations, and some for the beauty of the writing; but the mere age was not in former times particularly appreciated. Even they who valued the author they preserved, were not aware of the importance of the earliest MSS. because when no one dreamt of doubting the genuineness of a work, they would make no provisions for proving it to a future generation.

It is therefore a matter of pure chance, that any ancient MSS. of a book has descended to us.

We should be somewhat surpris'd, if we inquired minutely into the evidence on which we accredit the genuineness of the numerous ancient authors of Greece and Rome, because in many cases we should find, that far as antiquity of MSS. was concerned, it is very slight. I believe that we have in no case the MSS. actually

ally penned by the author, scarcely any in the author's time, and very few within two or three centuries after him. We have often adopted the title of the MSS. we have found, and have ascribed them to the authors whose names were prefixed. In some of the most celebrated, we can attest the genuineness by a series of quotations and allusions of succeeding ages. In many we only find notices that such authors wrote on such topics. Several have been received without either of these protections. And yet we have generally admitted them to be genuine, and laugh at the extravagance of Hardouin, who rashly pronounced the classics to be modern forgeries.

The fact which I have urged, that these poems have passed in Wales from age to age unquestioned, operates against the existence of many ancient MSS. They could not have anticipated doubt in a case where they neither had any, nor heard of any; and could not therefore have provided against it by carefully hoarding the most ancient MSS. for their posterity to produce. The doubt, however, hav-

ing been raised in our times, there can be no question but that the old MSS. now remaining will be henceforward very anxiously preserved.

There is another reason why old MSS. cannot be expected to abound in Wales. This is, that for so confined a district, it has been very often the object of military spoil. It was invaded and ravaged by many Anglo-Saxon kings. It had mourned the depredations of the Irish, and still more of the North men. Our Harold renewed their distresses in the angriest form before the Norman conquest. It suffered under William and the other Norman kings; and no one can forget the conquest of Edward the First. Welsh history abounds with civil feuds, and their correspondent ruin. The destruction of the superb library at Raglan Castle occurred in the time of Cromwell, and many other libraries were dispersed or destroyed.

Yet notwithstanding these losses, there are two, if not three ancient MSS. extant, which have no appearance of having been written later than the 12th century. One of these is the Black Book of Caermarthen, which, with
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the other, is now in the library at Hengurt, in Merionethshire. There is also another MS. in the Red Book of Hergest in Jesus College, Oxford, which seems to have been written in the 14th century.

The MSS. in the library at Hengurt are described by Lhwyd in his *Archæologia Britannica*, published 1707.

Mr. Lhwyd says, that the library of Hengurt, collected in the reign of Charles the First by that learned and candid antiquary Robert Vaughan, of Hengurt, esquire, consists of about 70 old MSS. on parchment, and a considerable number of others on paper.

“ The oldest MSS. I saw at Hengurt, is y Lhyvyr dy o Gaer Vyrddyn, or the Black Book of Caermarthen. It is a quarto of 54 leaves, containing poems of the sixth century, by Myrddyn Wyllt, Taliesin, Llywarch Hên, and Elaeth. The former part of this book is in a large fair character, and seems considerably older than the latter, and the latter might possibly have been transcribed by that noted Bard Cyndhelu Brydydh Mawr, or at least in
his

his time, which was about the year 1160. I am sensible Dr. Davies places this poet 90 years later ; but in this MS. fol. 52, I find he writes an elegy on the death of Madog ab Mredydh, Prince of Powys, which was in the year 1158." p. 225.

That Lhwyd is correct in placing Cyndhelu about 1160 there can be no doubt. His poems prove it.

In another part of his catalogue, he expresses himself in Welsh of this same MS. what may literally translated thus :

“ The Black Book of Caermarthen, a volume of 54 leaves quarto, parchment, in the library of Mr. Vaughan, at Hengurt. The first half of this seems to have been written in a very ancient large hand. The rest is in a later hand, but ancient *.” He then specifies its contents. Among these are the principal poems of Merdhin and Llywarch Hên, with some of Taliesin. The more recent hand writing comes in at fol. 45.

From those who have lately inspected this

* P. 261.

MS.

MS. I understand that the first part is written like prose, without the distinctions of the poetical lines, which is a mark of its antiquity, The Welsh Archaiology enables me to give the reader a specimen of this, as the editors have printed some pages out of it with exactness, It is in a large hand.

Gogonedauc argluit
hanpich guell. Athue
dicco de egluis, achagell A
kagell. ac egluis. A vast-
ad. a diffuis. A. Teir fin-
haun yffit. Due uch guit.
ac un uch eluit. A. yris-
gaud ar dit. A. firic ap'
wit. Athuendiguiste aw-
raham pen fit. A. Vuchet
tragiuit. A. adar aguen-
en. A. attpaur a dien *.

It requires some attention to distinguish the lines and their rimes, which are these :

* Archaiology, p. 575.

Gogonedauc argluit hanpich guell

Ath uedicco de egluis achagell.

A. kagell ac egluis

A. vastad a diffuis

A. Teir finhaun yffit

Due uch guit

Ac un uch eluit

A. yris gaud ar dit

A. firic ap' wit

Ath uendiguiste awraham pen fit

A. Vuchet tragiuit

A. adar aguenen

A. attpaur a dien.

The first part, by the style of writing, seems, as I am informed, to be the production of the tenth century, or thereabouts. The latter part resembles in the handwriting other MSS. which are known to have been written in the time of Cyndhelu, who flourished in the middle of the twelfth century.

Another ancient MS. in this library, Lhwyd concisely mentions under the title of "The Book of Taliesin*," because it contains most of

* P. 261.

his poems. It is a parchment MS. The writing is ancient. I have not myself seen it, but I am assured that it has the appearance of a MS. of the twelfth century. From the report, which I have heard of the liberality of its present proprietor, Colonel Griffith Howel Vaughan, I believe I do not err in stating, that no gentleman, whose curiosity should lead him to Hengurt, would be refused the liberty of seeing these two curious MSS.

In the time of Lhwyd there was another ancient MS. in this library, which he entitles "The Book of Aneurin *." It was an octavo, and contained the Gododin, and some other poems ascribed to Aneurin.

This was also in parchment, and I am informed had the appearance of a MSS. of the 12th century. It continued in the Hengurt library from the days of Lhwyd to our time, but within the last 20 years has disappeared from it. I will presume that it has been only borrowed, and that it will be honourably returned to the collection at Hengurt.

* P. 261 and 254.

The Red Book of Hergest is still in the library of Jesus College, at Oxford. Lhwyd says that it is in parchment, in folio, containing 465 leaves * ; that it exhibits antiquities of various kinds, and was written at the end of the fourteenth century †. It contains the poems of Llywarch Hên, some of Merdhin, and Taliesin, besides many poems of the following centuries ‡.

In the Hengurt library are two more recent

* According to the account of a gentleman who inspected this MS. in 1783, Lhwyd has stated the pages inaccurately. This gentleman's remark is, "Y Llyfr Coch" is a folio, containing 360 leaves, 720 pages, and 1440 "columns."

† P. 254 and 261.

‡ It also contains three Welsh chronicles, an ancient Welsh grammar, and some Welsh romances, as Buchedd Carlemain, Ystori Bown, (or Bevis) o Hamtwn, Ystor; Cilydd fab Celyddon Wledig, Ystori Efrauc Iarll y Gogledd, Ystori Gereint fab Erbin The Mabinogi, and the Ystori y Seithwyr Doethion. It has also the ancient Welsh medical treatise called Meddygon Myddfai, and the Triads, entitled Trioedd Ynys Prydain.

transcripts

transcripts of these old poems, which may be also mentioned. One MS. was written by Sir Hugh Pennant, in the time of Henry the Eighth. It contains the poems of Merddin and many others *.

Another copious transcript, entitled, "Y Kynveirdh Cymreig, or the Ancient Welsh Bards," was written by Mr. Robert Vaughan, in the time of Charles the First. It contains the Gododin; most of Taliesin's songs; those of Llywarch, and some others †.

There is another transcript called Kutta Kyvarwydh ‡.

In noticing these MSS. I am only stating the contents of the Hengurt library, and of the one at Jesus College. There are many other Welsh collections, which contain MSS. or transcripts of these ancient poems, of various ages before and since the 14th century. The Welsh MSS. in the library of the Earl of Macclesfield are not yet known. They were collected by the Rev. Moses Williams, who left them to

* Lhwyd, 256. † 258. ‡ 257.

Mr. William Jones, the father of the late celebrated Sir William Jones. Mr. Jones bequeathed them to the late Earl of Macclesfield, but they have not been yet allowed to be publicly inspected.

As they who wish to investigate the subject of the MSS. more closely, may desire to know the best places for their research, I will refer them to the "General Advertisement" to the Welsh Archaology, which contains a statement of the principal collections, not of these Bards only, but of all the Welsh literature.

I do not propose this work to be a vindication of all the poems that have been generally attributed to Aneurin, Taliesin, Merdhin, or Llywarch Hên, or promiscuously published as theirs. My object is to authenticate the genuineness of such of them as I think beyond all dispute ; and they are the following :

OF ANEURIN,

The Gododin.

OF LLYWARCH HEN,

The Elegy on Geraint ab Erbin.

Ditto on Urien Reged.

Ditto on Cynddylan.

Ditto on Cadwallon.

The Poem on his old age.

Ditto to Maenwyn.

Ditto to the Cuckoo.

OF MERDWIN.

The Avallenau.

OF TALIESIN.

The Poems to Urien, and on his battles.

His Dialogue with Merdwin.

The Poems on Elphin.

And his Historical Elegies.

D

In

In selecting the above, I do not mean to insinuate that some others, which are ascribed to these authors, may not be genuine likewise. I am satisfied that some are not genuine, and that some have been interpolated. There are several others, however, especially of Taliesin, which may be genuine. But I conceive that the question which presses is, not whether this or that poem is to be accredited, because a simpler investigation of its evidences might determine that if a given number had been already admitted, but whether there are *any* which ought to be placed in an age so early. The prevailing scepticism denies that there are any genuine poems of the sixth century extant. It asserts, that every Welsh poem, referred by Welshmen to this ancient period, is a factitious composition of the twelfth or succeeding century. My duty, therefore, if I attempt to impugn this scepticism, is to shew that there are genuine works of the sixth century now in existence. I adduce the poems above selected as such. If my arguments are successful as to these poems, then any others may be added to
the

the accredited number, which judicious and learned criticism shall allow to be genuine, after due consideration.

Now of the Gododin, I have mentioned, that, until very lately, a MS. of it was in the Hengurt library, which seemed to be of the hand writing of the twelfth century. I am informed that it was in hand writing and appearance very similar to the book of Taliesin, which is yet in the library, and may be seen by any one. A complete transcript of the Gododin was made by Mr. Vaughan, in the time of Charles the First, and many copies of it, of various dates, exist in Welsh collections.

The poems of Llywarch Hên, above mentioned, are in the Black Book of Caermarthen, and in the Red Book of Hergest. They are a part of Mr. Vaughan's transcript, and of others.

The Avallenau of Merdhin is in the Black Book of Caermarthen, with others that are ascribed to him. It is in Sir Hugh Pennant's transcript, made in the time of Henry the

Eighth, in the Kutta Kyvaruydh, and in other transcripts.

Of Taliesin, the Dialogue with Merdhin, the Graves of the Warriors, and a few others, are in the Black Book of Caermarthen. Most of those, which I have mentioned to be his, are with others in the MS. called the Book of Taliesin, in the Hengurt library, which is placed in the twelfth century, or nearly so. Some are in the Red Book of Hergest, and all are in Mr. Vaughan's transcript, and many in y Kutta Kyvaruydh.

What other ancient MSS. of any of the works of these Bards, are in the Macclesfield, or other collections, I cannot state, because I am not informed. But I conceive, that from the above statement, I am authorized to affirm, that there are MSS. of poems of these four Bards now extant, which were written in or before the twelfth century. I will confirm this assertion by shewing,

2ndly,

2ndly, That these poems, or some of them, and their authors, have been mentioned or alluded to by a series of Bards, whose works still exist undisputed, from before the twelfth century, to a recent period.

There is a poem which bears the same name with one of Taliesin's, but which is attributed to Golyddan. It is called Arymes Prydein Vawr. From its internal evidence, it seems to have been written in the end of the seventh, or in the eighth century. He mentions that the Britons will recover their country again, and adds *, "Dyfgogan Merddin,"—Merddin foretells it. This is a direct allusion to that passage of the *Avallennan*, which we shall hereafter quote, and which Jeffery has imitated. In this passage, Merddin foretells the return of the Britons.

In an ancient composition, which is usually placed in the tenth century, called *Englynion y Clywaid*, we find Llywarch quoted as a Bard:

* *Welsh Archaeology*, p 156.

“ Haft thou heard what *Llywarch* fang
 “ (The intrepid and brave old man)
 “ Greet kindly, tho’ there be no acquaintance.”

A glyweisti a gant *Llywarch*,
 Oedd henwr drud dihavarch :
 Onid kyvarwydd cyva ch.

Arch. Cynveirdd, p. 173.

In the same poem we find *Taliesin* mentioned as a Bard, and his son quoted :

“ Haft thou heard what *Avaon* fang
 “ (The son of *Taliesin*, whose muse was just.)
 “ The countenance cannot conceal the sorrow of the
 heart.”

A glyweisti a gant *Avaon*,
 Vab *Taliesin* gerdd gyvion :
 Ni chel grudd gyftudd calon. P. 173.

None of the poems of *Avaon* have survived,

In another of the same poems, we find *Aneurin* incidentally mentioned, and as a Bard :

“ Haft thou heard the saying of *Kennyd*
 “ The son of *Aneurin*, the well-skilled Bard :
 “ There are none free from care but the provident.”

A glyweisti gwedyl *Cennyz*
 Vab *Aneurin* varz celvyz :
 Nid dioval ond dedwyz.

In

In the same poem, both *Taliesin* and *Merdhin* are distinctly specified, and as contemporaries :

“Hast thou heard the saying of *Taliesin*

“In conversation with *Merdhin*.

“It is natural for the indiscreet to laugh immoderately.”

A glyweisti gwedyl *Taliesin*,

Yn ymzizan â *Merzin* :

Gnawd i anghall traçwerthin.

In another poem of the same age, or perhaps earlier, we find an obvious allusion to the poem of *Aneurin* on the battle of *Cattraeth* :

“Like *Cattraeth* great and glorious.”

“*Eilywod Gattræth vaur vygedauc*”

Welsh Arch. 180,

Why was *Cattraeth* great and glorious ? Not from the event, for that was peculiarly disastrous to the Britons ; but it was made glorious by the much celebrated poem of *Aneurin* upon it. Unless we presume this poem to have then existed, the line has no meaning.

These six notices of these ancient Bards are taken from poems which, according to the ge-

neral consent of the best Welsh critics, were written before the twelfth century.

The allusions to these Bards in the authors of the *twelfth century* are very numerous. There are not fewer than fourteen passages distinctly referring to those Bards, or some of their poems, in the works of the twelfth century. I will produce them as nearly as possible in the order of their chronology.

1, Between the years 1140, and 1172, was HYWEL, the son of Owen, of Gwynedh. His father was honoured with some of the best poems of Gwalchmai * and Cynddelu †, the two stars of the Welsh Parnassus; and to his son Hywel, whom I am going to quote, Cynddelu also addressed an ode ‡.

This prince wrote some odes on Love, and some on War. In one, which is entitled Gorhofedh, or his Delights, he mentions Merdhin, and speaks of him as a Bard.

* See Archaiol. p. 196—198.

† Ibid. 204---207.

‡ Ibid. p. 258.

“ To construct an ancient or primitive song,

“ A song of praise, such as *Merdhin* sang.”

Kyffylltu canu kyffevin

Kert volyant val y cant Mertin

Welsh Arch. p. 273.

Here the prince explicitly mentions Merdhin, not merely as a Bard, but as one in his days, (or in the twelfth century,) ancient or primitive. To construct an ancient song, such as Merdhin sang, is, in effect, to say that Merdhin's songs were ancient.

The expressions seem to indicate that Merdhin's poetry existed in his time; for how could he have talked of constructing or putting together a song like Merdhin's, unless some of Merdhin's poetry was in being.

CYNDDELU was a Bard who lived between 1150, and 1200, and whose genius, although various, yet excelled in the bolder strains of heroic poetry. His compositions were numerous. Forty-nine of his pieces have descended to us.

2, In his elegy on Rhiryd, he mentions Taliesin

iefin by name, and as a distinguished Welsh Bard. The passage will speak for itself.

Whilst there was the solemn feast, and suitable wealth,

To me no one would speak but agreeably;

To me the mild chief intermitted not his numerous
gifts;

To me the valiant one made not the two cheeks of dis-
grace:

The song was not a voice of disgrace to the people of
Cynvarch.

“From the head of *Taliesin*, in bardic learning ex-
alted,

A bardic lay shall come to me.”

Tra vu vyg kyvet yg kyuoeth yawn,

Nym llauarei y nep nam bei digawn

Nym ditolei y lary o lawer dawn;

Nym goruc deur wr deurut warthlawn:

Ny bu warthlef kert kynverching werin.

O benn *Taliesin* bartrin beirtrig

Barteir om kyveir.

Cynddelu, *Marunad Ririd*. p. 230.

3, In another poem, an elegy on Owen of Gwynedh, Cynddelu visibly alludes to the poem of *Taliesin* on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain:

Hastening

Hastening mutually to urge on,
 In heroic manner, in the great field so illustrious,
 The horned array of the winged warrior
 Was the energy, the heroism of Owen.
 In the tumult, the leader of slaughter heaps carcases,
 As in the bloody *conflict* of *Argoed Llwyvain*.

Yn ebrwyd gyfarwain
 Y gwrfoes yg orfaes cyfrgain
 I gornawr gwriawr goradain
 Ygwrial ygwryd Owain
 Ygorun aergun aergyfrain
 Yn aergad yn Argoed Llwyfain.

Cynd. Mar. Ow. Gwyn. 207.

The name fake of the hero of Cynddelu had been praised by Taliesin in his poem on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain on this occasion.

The Britons, under Urien and his son Owen, were invaded by a Saxon leader, whom Taliesin names Flamddwyn. This word literally means *flame-bearing*, and therefore is probably not the real name of the Saxon General, but an angry epithet descriptive of his ravages. Taliesin mentions that he made an insolent demand of hostages and submission from the Britons.

“ Flamddwyn

“Flamddwyn demanded with great impetuosity

“Will they give hostages—are they ready?”

Atorelwis. Flamddwyn fawr drybestawd:

A ddodynt yngwyfion: a ynt parawd?

Taliesin, Gwaith Arg. Ll. 53.

He then distinguishes the eager courage of Owen, who was the first to give the answer of patriotism to the invaders.

“He was answered by Owen, Let the gash appear---

“They will give none---the hostages are not, shall not be ready.”

Yr attebwys. Owain ddwyrain foffawd

Nid dodynt, nid ydynt, nid ynt parawd.—Ibid.

The poet then mentions the furious conflict which followed from this refusal of submission.

Now the compliment which Cynddelu paid to the hero of his elegy, Owen of Gwynedd, by alluding to the battle of Llwyvain, was this: The refusal and defiance to Flamddwyn was given by Owen, the son of Urien; and this spirited conduct produced the celebrated conflict which followed. By comparing the battle of his Owen with that in which the Owen of Taliesin had distinguished himself, Cynddelu appears

appears to have meant to have exalted the character of his own hero, by assimilating it to the merit and celebrity of his recorded namesake.

4, This same author, Cynddelu, also alludes in another place to the poem of Taliesin on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain :

“ He hurried on impetuously to the assault like the flame-spreading Flamddwyn.”

Ffwyr ffysgiad fal ffeimiad Flamddwyn.

Cynd. Dadol. Rhys. 235.

Who was this Flamddwyn ? It has been already mentioned that it is the descriptive name of the Saxon hero in the poem of Taliesin, on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain ; and it is remarkable that he is distinguished by Taliesin for the circumstance, to illustrate which his name is here introduced.

The point of the simile is the hurrying to the attack—He hurried impetuously to it like Flamddwyn. Now when Taliesin mentions Flamddwyn, it is with the same circumstance of impetuosity and haste : Thus, when he first mentions him, he says,

“ Dygryfowys

“Dygryfowys Flamddwyn.”

“Flamddwyn *hastened quickly*”

to his hostile object.

When he mentions him again, he says,

“Atorelwis Flamddwyn fawr drybestawd.”

“Flamddwyn demanded with *great impetuosity*.”

It seems that Cynddelu introduced the simile of Flamddwyn from recollecting this poem and these expressions of Taliesin.

5, Cynddelu also mentions Merdhin. I will quote the passage at length, that the reader may have some idea of the manner of these Welsh Bards. The subject of the poem from which this extract is made, is the death of Owen. The poem is an elegy on the death, the effect of which, on many, he now proceeds to describe :

On the progeny of Run lie the red earth and stones :

Ominous, not glad tidings, was the fate of the Chief :

It is an omen of the pain of agitated terror,

To the finger from the splendour of the palace,

To

To the minstrels whose requests were for *slender coursers**.
But to the crimsoned wolf of terror, and to the ravens,
it was a boon.

Frequently will it come to the memory of the profound
Bards ;

To Cynddelu it forbodes delay to his claims of honour.
Of the honour'd sovereign—the armour of the host of
raging slaughter—

Of Owen, God has determined the day ;
Of the venerated head appropriately predominating in
Britain.

Thus in the conflict of Arderydd, wrath stalked through
the battle,

Amid ruin and falling slaughter

Over myriads of men, over *Merdbin*, who was illustrious."

Ar hil Run rud weryd a main

Y dragon coeling nid coelfain ei dwyn

Ys coel brwyn braw dilain

I gerdawr a'm preidiawr a'm prain

* Literally "for the *slender-bodied ones*." The Welsh poetry has frequently instances of descriptive adjectives being used to express noun substantives. Thus the Bards sometimes put *meinir* for a charming woman. The word literally means any thing slender and lively. For the same interesting object, they have also the compound *eiliw-manod*, or "resembling in mien the light driven snow."

I eilwyon

I eilwyon am eirchion archfain
 I flaid rud i fraw fud i frain
 I feird dwfn dyf yd a gofiain
 I Gyndelw oed ardelw urdain
 Urd Wledig llnrig llu aergrain
 Urdws Duw diwyrnawd Owain
 Urdawl ben priawdnen Prydain
 Mal gwaith Arderyd gwyth ar dyrfain cad
 In argrad yn aergrain
 Uch myrd wyr uch Myrdhin oed cain.

Mar. Ow. Gwyn. 207.

He goes on to describe the motions of the
 birds of prey on the battle, which I will add
 for its strong imagery :

Over the hawk's station, over the hawk's banquet of
heads

Over the quivering of the spears reddening was the wing.

Over the howling of the storm the course of the sea-
gull was manifest.

Over the blood whirling, the blood flowing the exult-
ing ravens were screaming.

Over the blood gushing, over the treasure of the fierce-
wing'd race,

Was the clamour of the apt energy, aptly spreading
thro' the sky.

Uch

Uch gwalchlan uch gwa'ch'ad pennain
 Uch gwayw ryn yn rudaw adain
 Uch gwaed gwynt golau hynt gwylain
 Uch gwaed lyry gwaedlanw gwaedai gigfrain
 Uch gwaed frau uch adnau ednain
 Yg gawr huyfsgwr huyfsgain yn wybyr.---

Mar. Ow. Gwyn. 207.

In this passage we see Merdhin mentioned as being illustrious or splendid, and as having been in the battle of Arderydd. Now Merdhin the Bard was in this battle; and why was he particularized with the epithet "illustrious?" The poem, already quoted, of Howel explains it. It was the effect of his bardic fame.

6. Another princely Bard was Owen Cyveil-ioc. He flourished between 1150 and 1197. He was the prince of Powys. He was engaged in some intestine conflicts with Howel*; he fought with our Henry, and at last excited against himself Owen of Gwynedd, the hero of the poetry of Gwalchmai and Cyndelu. This hero defeated and expelled Owen Cyveil-ioc in 1166 from Powys, to which, however, he was re-admitted.

* See Wynne's History of Wales, 187.

This Owen of Powys has written a very interesting poem called "Hîrlas," or the Blue long Horn; and in this we meet with an undeniable allusion to the poem of Aneurin on the battle of Catteraeth. The poem is given in English among Evans's specimens*; but as his translation is too free to suit the severity of documents for accurate reasoning, I will turn it into more literal English.

After speaking of Madawc and Meilir, as "men habituated to tumult," as "the shields of their army," "the teachers of battle," he suddenly introduces,

"Hear how with their portion of mead, went with
their Lord to Catteraeth

Faithful the purpose of their sharp weapons,

The host of Mynydauc, to their fatal rest.

They obtained the recording, tho' pernicious to their
active leader.

They did not, like my warriors in the hard struggle
of Maelor,

Liberate the prisoner, yet their praise has been estab-
lished."

* P. 7.

Kigleu

Kigleu am dal met myned dreig Kattræth
 Kywir eu harvaeth arveu lliveid
 Gofgort Vynytauc am eu cyfgeid
 Kawffant y hadrawt cas vlawt vleinieid
 Ni wnaeth a wnaeth vynghedwyr ynghalet Vaelor
 Dillwng karcharor dullest voleid.

Hirias Euein, 266.

I think that this passage affords very satisfactory testimony to the existence of the Gododin at this period, even though Aneurin's name is not here mentioned.

My reasons for the opinion are these :

1. The prince alludes to the warriors who went with Mynydauc to Cattraeth, as having drunk their mead. Now the great topic perpetually recurring in the Gododin is that the Britons lost the battle of Cattraeth, and suffered so severely because they had drunk their mead too profusely. The passages in the Gododin, on this point, are numerous : for example,

“ Men went to Cattraeth ; loquacious were their hosts ;

“ Pale mead had been their feast, and was their poison,”

“ Gwyr aeth Gattræth oed ffraeth y lu

Glasved eu hancwyn æ gwenwyn vu.”

Aneurin, Gododin, p. 2.

“ They

“ They had drank together the sparkling mead by the
light of rushes :

Pleasant was it's taste, long was it's woe.”

Cyt yven vedd gloew wrth liw babir

Cyt vei da ei vlas y gas bu hir.

Gododin, p. 3.

“ In fair order round the banquet they feasted together;

“ Wine, mead, and mirth they enjoyed.”

Gloyw ddull y am drulyt gytrvaethant

Gwin a mel a mal amuefant.---Ibid. p. 9.

2. The prince mentions that the Britons went to Cattræth under the conduct of Mynydauc, their leader, and he calls them Gofgordd Mynydauc, the host of Mynydauc. Now Aneurin, in many places, mentions Mynydauc as the leader of the Britons, and in no fewer than five places uses the very phrase to express them, which Owen selects as if borrowing from him. I mean Gofgordd Mynydauc. Thus Aneurin said,

“ The warriors went to Cattræth with the dawn :

“ They strove in the flight daringly :

“ Eleven hundred and three hundred were hurling

“ Drenched in blood ; they were vehement in the dart-
ing of the lance :

“ They

“ They stationed themselves with manly gallantry

“ From the host of Mynydauc the courteous.

“ The warriors went to Cattræth with the dawn,

“ Confident in exposing themselves to their inevitable
fate:

“ They had drank the yellow, sweet ensnaring mead.

“ Merry had been the hours, merry the fingers;

“ Red became their swords and plumage,

“ Their white shining blades, and square helmets,

“ From the host of Mynydauc the courteous.”

Gwyr a æth Gattræth gan wawr

Travodynt yn hed yn hovnawr

Milcant a thrychant a em daflawr

Gwyarllyt a gwynodynt waeulawr

Ef gorsaf eng gwriaf eng guriawr

Rac Gofgordd Mynyddawc mwynvawr.

Gwyr a æth Gattræth gan vawr

Dygymyrrus eu hoet eu hangenawr

Med yvynt melyn melys maglawr

Blwydyn bu llewyn llawen cerdawr

Coch eu cledyfau na phlwawr

Eu llain gwynygalch a phedryolet benawr

Rac Gofgordd Mynyddawc mwyn vawr.---Ibid. p. 2.

The Gofgordd Mynydauc, and the sad effects of the mead, are mentioned by Aneurin again:

“ The warriors had hastened swift all running together;

“ Short were their lives drunk over the distilled mead.

“ The host of Mynydauc abounding with gold were in
distress.

“ The price of their banquet of mead was their lives.”

Gwyr a gryffiasant buant gytneit

Hoedlvyrion medduon uch medd hidleir

Gofgordd Vynyddawc eurawc yn rheit

Gwerth eu gwledd o vedd vu eu heneit.---Ibid. p. 6.

Aneurin mentions the Gofgordd Mynydauc
twice more, as

“ Of the host of Mynydauc none escaped,

“ Except one weapon altogether weak and precipi-
tated.”

O Osgordd Vynyddawc ni ddiangwys

Namyn un arf amddiphurf amddiffwys. Ib. p. 11.

And,

“ From Cattrath their army was loquacious,

“ Of the host of Mynydawr, great in misery,

“ Of three hundred, but one man came out ;

“ From the wine-feast ; from the mead-feast they had
hastened.”

Rac Cattrath oedd ffraeth eu llu

O ofgordd Vynyddawr vawr dru

O drychant namyn un gwr ny ddyvu

O winveith a meddveith est gryffiasant.--Ibid. p. 9.

3. When to the above remark it is added
that the prince of Powys says this tribe of
Mynydauc had “ obtained a recording,” and
that their praise was established, can we doubt
that

that he spoke of the Gododin of Aneurin, and had taken from it the allusion, which has been cited from him. In the Gododin, these unfortunate Britons have obtained a recording, and their mead is distinctly mentioned as the cause of their calamity. Hence I consider this passage in Owen's poem as a satisfactory testimony of the existence of the Gododin in his time. The prince has also a line in his poem which is so similar to one in the Gododin, as to warrant the supposition that it was borrowed from it.

“Nid yn hyn dihyll nam hen deheu.”

The line in the Gododin is this,

“Ni bu hil dihyll na hen deheu.”

Before I dismiss the prince of Cyveilioc, I cannot but crave permission to mention a very interesting and original elegiac turn which occurs in his poem of the Hîrlas.

The prince was a turbulent warrior, generally fighting with some of his neighbours. His Hîrlas, however, shews that he possessed a strong poetic genius, and applied it to celebrate the warriors who accompanied him in his

quarrels. The plan of the poem is ingenious and picturesque. He fancies himself surrounded by his chiefs at the festive table, rejoicing in their victory; and he orders his cupbearer to pour out the generous beverage to those whom he intends to celebrate, and whom he selects and describes successively. Two of his accustomed companions, and favourite warriors, were Moreiddig and Tudyr, who had just perished in a preceding battle. In the ardour of his festivity and panegyric, he forgot that they were no more. Therefore, after directing the horn of mead to be sent to his warriors, and after addressing each of them with appropriate praise, he proceeds to send it to Moreiddig and Tudyr. He recites their merit—He turns to greet them—but their place is vacant—he beholds them not—he hears their dying groan—he recollects their fate—his triumphant strains cease—his hilarity flies, and the broken tones of mournful exclamation suddenly burst out. Shall I be pardoned if I digress awhile to insert the passage in a close translation.

To enhance the compliment which he is
going

going to pay, he threatens death to his cup-bearer if he execute his office unskilfully.

Fill, cup-bearer, seek not death—

Fill the horn of honour at our banquets,

The long blue horn, of high privilege, of ancient
silver,

That covers it not sparingly;

Bear to Tudyr, eagle of slaughter,

A prime beverage of florid wine.

Thy head shall be the forfeit if there come not in

The most delicious mead

To the hand of Moreiddig, encourager of songs:

May they become old in fame before they leave us!

Ye blameless brothers of aspiring souls,

Of dauntless ardour that would grasp ev'n fire;

Heroes, what services ye have atchieved for me!

Not old, disgustingly, but old in skill;

Unwearied, rushing wolves of battle;

First in the crimsoned rank of bleeding pikes,

Brave leaders of the Mochnantians, from Powys,

The prompt ones, in every need,

Who rescue their borders from violence,

Praise is your meed, most amiable pair!

Ha!---the cry of death—And do I miss them—

O Christ!---how I mourn their catastrophe---

O lost Moreiddig---how greatly shall I need thee.

Hirlas Euein, p. 266.

7. In

7. In the same century, from the year 1160 to 1220, lived the bard LLYWARCH AB LLYW-ELYN, or as he has been most commonly called Llywarch Prydydd y Moch. He has left 32 poems.

In one of his odes to the son of Iorwerth, this bard mentions Taliesin as a bard, and also a circumstance, which is the subject of one of Taliesin's poems, to which therefore Llywarch P. y Moch must be supposed to be alluding. The words of Llywarch are,

I will address my Lord
 With the greatly greeting muse,
 With the dowry of Cyridwen,
 The ruler of Bardism,
 In the manner of Taliesin
 When he liberated Elphin
 When he overshadowed the bardic mystery
 With the banners of the bards.

Cyvarchaf ym ren

Cyvarchvawr awen

Cyvreu Kyridwen

Rhwyf bartoni

Yn dull Taliesin

Yn dillwng Elfin

Yn

Yn dyllest bartrin

Beirt vanyeri.

Llywel. y Canu Bychan, 303.

The poem of Taliesin, which he wrote to obtain Elphin's release from the prison where his uncle Maelgwn had confined him yet exists. It is called the Mead song. It has considerable merit, and may be thus faithfully translated :

TALIESIN'S MEAD SONG.

I will implore the Sovereign, Supreme in every region,
The Being who supports the heavens, Lord of all space,
The Being who made the waters, to every body good ;
The Being who sends every gift and prospers it,
That Maelgwn of Mona be inspired with mead, and
cheer us with it

From the mead horns---the foaming, pure and shining
liquor

Which the bees provide, but do not enjoy.

Mead distilled I praise---its eulogy is every where,

Precious to the creature whom the earth maintains.

God made it for man for his happiness ;

The fierce and the mute, both enjoy it.

The Lord made both the wild and the gentle,

And has given them cloathing for ornament,

And food and drink to last till judgment.

I will

I will implore the Sovereign, Supreme in the land of
peace,

To liberate Elphin from banishment,

The man that gave me wine, ale, and mead,

And the great princely steeds of gay appearance,

And to me yet would give as usual :

With the will of God, he would bestow from respect

Innumerable festivities in the course of peace.

Knight of Mead, relation of Elphin, distant be thy
period of inaction.---Arch. p. 22.

Golychaf wledig pendefig pob wa

Gwr a gynneil y nef Arglwydd pob tra

Gwr a wnaeth y dwfr i bawb yn dda

Gwr a wnaeth pob llad ac ai llwydda

Meddwer Maelgwn Mon ag an meddwa

Ai feddgorn ewyn gwerlyn gwymha

As gynnul gwenyn ac nis mwynha

Med hidleid moleid molud i bob tra

Lleaws creadur a fag terra

A wnaeth Duw i ddyn er ei ddonha

Rhaidrud rhai mud ef ai mwynha

Rhai gwyllt rhai dof Dofydd ai gwna

Yn dillig iddynt yn dillad ydd a

Yn fwyd yn ddiawd hyd frawd yd barha

Golychaf i wledig pendefig gwlad hedd

I ddillwng Elphin o alltudedd

Y gwr am rhoddes y gwin ar cwrwf ar medd

Ar meirch mawr modur mirein eu gwedd
 Am rothwy etwa mal y diwedd
 Trwy fodd Duw y rhydd trwy enrhydedd
 Pump pemhwnt calan ynghaman hedd
 Elffinawg farchawg medd hwyr dy ogledd.

Taliesin, canu y medd, p. 22.

Taliesin wrote two other poems concerning Elphin which are yet extant. One called "The Consolation of Elphin;" the other entitled "To the Wind;" but I think the Mead song was the poem which Llywarch P. y Moch had in his contemplation, when he said he would address the Lord, like Taliesin, to liberate Elphin, because the very phrase used by Llywarch in speaking of this poem, "yn dillwng Elphin," "to liberate Elphin," is in the mead song.

8. Nor is this all the inference to be deduced from this poem of Llywarch's. The first four lines of Llywarch will be found on a comparison so nearly similar to four commencing lines of another poem of Taliesin, that I think no one can dispute that he borrowed them from Taliesin.

LLYWARCH.

Cyvarchaf ym ren
 Cyvarchyawr awen

TALIESIN.

Kyvarchaf im Rben
Ystyriav Awen

LLYWARCH.

LLYWARCH.

Cyvren Kyridwen

Rwyf bartoni

I will address the Lord

With the greatly greeting,

Muse,

With the dowry of Cyrid-
wen,

The ruler of Bardism.

TALIESIN.

Py ddyddwg angen

Cyn no *Chyridwen*.

I will address the Lord

With the meditating Muse,

That endured necessity

Before Cyridwen. *

The first line, and part of the second, are exactly the same in both. The singular idea in the other lines proves the intentional imitation of Llywarch P. Moch. To speak of Cyridwen a mythological personage †, very little mentioned elsewhere, could not have hap-

* Cyridwen means literally, "the producing woman." She is one of the beings peculiar to the ancient Welsh mythology, and appears to have been considered by the Bards as the productress of things; in a word, to have borne that character, which Lucretius gives to Venus in his introduction to his *De Natura Rerum*. There are several mythological personages mentioned in ancient Welsh literature, who are worth attending to, because in them we perhaps see some curious remains of the earliest traditions of the western parts of Europe.

† P. 24.

pened

pened to both in an introduction so very similar both in metre and words, unless the one had borrowed it from the other. I therefore submit that this imitation of Llywarch attests that this poem of Taliesin, called "The Mab Gyvreu Taliesin," was in being in Llywarch's time. I think also, by Llywarch mentioning Taliesin, and alluding to another poem of his immediately after this imitation of him, that it warrants the assertion, according to the experienced laws of the association of ideas, that Llywarch deemed the lines he was imitating to be Taliesin's. If so, this single passage is evidence that the Mead song, and the Mab Gyvreu of Taliesin, were existing and accredited as his in the twelfth century.

9. Llywarch P. Moch, in this same poem, gives also an attestation of Merdhin : he says,

Merdhin prophesied
That a king would come
From the Cymry nation,
Out of the oppressed.

Druids

Druids declared,
That liberality shall be renewed
From the progeny of the eagles
Of Snowdon.

Darogan Mertin
Dyvod breyenhin
O Gymry werin
O gamhwri
Dywawd derwyton
Dadeni haelon
O hil eryron
O Eryri.

Ll. Canu Bych. 304.

This prediction of Merdhin's, of better fortune to Wales, was also noticed by Golyddan, whom we have quoted before. The passage now existing in Merdhin's Avallenau, to which these bards seem to have alluded, will be presently adduced.

10. The same bard has also the following allusion to the Gododin of Aneurin.

"Like Cacawg the foremost hero ministering to the birds of prey."

"Adar weinidawc Caeawc cynran drud. p. 298.

Caeawg

Caeawg is much celebrated in the Gododin, and is several times mentioned there with epithets expressing the same quality as Llywarch in this passage intends to denote. This quality was his eagerness to be the foremost in the battle, which Aneurin signifies by cynhaiawc and cynhorawc, and Llywarch by cynran; all the three adjectives are nearly synonymous.

As Llywarch P. Moch was one of the most distinguished poets of the twelfth century, it may relieve this tedious detail, if I intermix a specimen of his mode of describing a battle. Battles were the favourite transactions of that age, and therefore engrossed most of the bardic lays. They are usually noticed with some original touches, which to us who are nurtured in a happier state of intellect and society, will seem horrible and disgusting. How much is it to be regretted, that the melioration of our taste should be so distinct from the amendment of our conduct!

Melancholy is it to us, the bards of the world, that earth
lies upon him :

Sorrow is over us :

He was our leader before the wrath of fate separated us,
The ravagers ravaged onwards with fury ;
Dreadful was the crimson gushing from the men before
so mild ;

Dead was the greatest part in the tumult,
Of the various-coloured waves, broken was the sound
of their roar :

They were not silent ;
A briny wave, * extensive from exerting rage ;
Another wave, fierce, of red gore,
When the leader of the glittering hosts overcame
Llewelyn, the chief of wide-spreading Alun.
A myriad was slain—the lure of the ravens incessantly
screaming---

All warriors---and a thousand in captivity.

When we passed from Porth Aethwy.
On the steeds of the sea flood over the great tumult of
the waves

There were thronging spears---awful was their fury--
Conspicuous was the red rippling blood---
Terrible was our onset---it was unlovely---

* The scene of this conflict was the strait of the Menai,
which separates Anglesey from the main land.

It was misery---it was death unparalleled :
It was a doubt to the world, if there were left
A residue of us for the dissolution of age,

11. GWYNVARDD BRYCHEINIAWG, flourished between 1160, and 1220. He has left us two small poems, one addressed to the Lord Rhys, the prince of South Wales*, the other to St. David.

In the one addressed to Rhys, he quotes Merdhin thus, p. 270.

For Tegeingyl, for the land of the Angles thronging together

For the fellow brother of Medrawd, of whom *Merdhin* prophesied.

Am Degeingyl, am dir Eingyl yn ymdyrru
Am gydvrawd Medrawd Merdhin darogan.

Gwyn. Br. p. 269.

Merdhin is here mentioned as prophesying of Medrawd. If we turn to his *Avallenau*, we shall find that he there so speaks of Medrawd,

Sweet apple-tree, conspicuous as the hill of our congress
Towering above the wood surrounding its roots, unshaded !

* Wynne's History, p. 193.

I will prophesy the coming again
Of Medrawd and Arthur, the sovereign of the host,
As at Camlan, preparing to conflict.

Afallen beren bren eil wyddfa
Cwn coed cylch ei gwraidd digwascotva;
A mi ddyfgoganaf dyddaw etwa
Medrawd ac Arthur modur tyrfa
Camlann darmerthan difieu yna

Myrd. Avall. p. 153

I submit, that when the passage of Gwynvardd is compared with this of Merdhin, it will seem probable that this part of the Aval-lenau was alluded to by Gwynvardd, and consequently that the Avallenau was in existence in his time.

12. ELIDIR SAIS, lived between 1160, and 1220. Eleven of his poems are preserved. In his Dadolwch, or atonement to Llywelyn, the son of Iorwerth, he mentions both Taliesin and Merdhin by name, and speaks of their poetry as being an object of *sight*, consequently existing.

This

This passage is certainly important, and if the lines were to be cited by themselves, they would be found to express the idea I have suggested. But the true sense of any passage, depends sometimes on the other parts with which it is connected. Now it is proper that I should state, that the part in which these few lines occur, is obscure, and of difficult construction. But as it can answer no honourable purpose, to lay before the reader a delusion, where he expects a proof, I will translate the whole poem of Elidir Sais, as literally as possible, and leave it to his own judgement to decide the force of the evidence, which, in my opinion, implies an inspection of existing works.

Natural is the quaffing of the clear bright wine
 From the horn of the buffalo,
 From the fold of the bugle :
 Natural is the singing of the cuckoo in the beginning of
 the summer,
 Natural is the increasing growth of the springing blade :
 Natural to the wise is his intellectual wealth ;
 But not natural, not tranquil is it to be sorrowful.

Regret has done me great injury
 For the brothers of dignity, the best men of the West ;

Brothers separated in lamentable terror by foes :
 Oh God, and Mary, and the sisters ! Can I smile ?
 Can I be rejoiced with a mind wild with anxiety ?

He came as a lion with lightning impelling,
 The excelling hawk, the victorious hawk of enterprise ;
 Llewelyn, the gentle soveraign,
 Of courteous manners ; the director of the filling of the
 circulating glass *.

I am not accustomed to the habit of soaring † ;
 I have not been roaming
 To view ‡ the paths of the songs of Taliesin ;
 Lo ! I am not so agile
 As, the end of the frail conflict of Breiddin
 To express, out of the bardic strains of Merddin.

I will give thee counsel : who art most excellent in
 disposition ;

Whose dread spreads beyond the sea !
 Consider, when you oppress beyond the borders,
 To make every one extend his head to his knees ;
 Be to the weak an equal distribution of the spoil ;
 Be truly mild to the songs of the right line ;

* *i. e.* Of the banquet.

† Literally, “ whirling round.”

‡ *i. e.* To track, or imitate from inspection, as I conceive ; but the word literally means to behold, or to view.

Be

Be of ardent courage in the slaughter—adhere to thy
labour ;

Destroy England, and plunder its multitudes.

Mercy be to thee in thy stony fortrefs
For loving the prophetic Deity !

Gnawd yr yfawdd glyw gloyw win—o fual,
O fuarth buelin ,

Gnawd cathleu cogeu cýntefin

Gnawd y tyf tywys o egin

Gnawd y doeth cyfoeth cyfyewin

Ni nawd nid llonydd allwynin

Hiraeth am ry wnaeth rewin

Braint brødyr gwellwyr gollewin

Broder de braw aeie elin

Duw a mair a chwair yn chwerthin

Dothyw llew a lluchygyr gorddin

Detholwalch buddugfalch byddin

Llywelyn llyerw freyenhin

Llary ddefawd llyw gwyrddrawd gwydrin

Nid wyf gynnefawd gynnefin amchwyf

Ni rybum gerddenin

Edrych cyrdd cerddau Taliesin

Edrych ni mor wyf eddein

Ry ddarfod brau gyfnod Breiddin

Ry ddywawd oi farddwawd Ferddin

Cyfful ath roddaf oth rin wyd goreu

Gorofu tra merin

Ystyrych pan dreifych dros ffin
 Ystwnng pawb hyd ben ei ddeulin
 Bydd wrth wann gyfran gywrenhin
 Bydd iawn llary wrth gorddau iownllin
 Bydd wrddrud aer ddylud ddi lin
 Dilein Lloegr a llwgr oi gwerin
 Trugaredd ath fo oth feinyn gaerwedd
 O garu Duw ddewin.---Elidr Sais. Dad. 345.

The import of the passage appears to me to be, that the poems of Taliesin and Merdhin existed in this author's time, or how could they be viewed, imitated, or spoken from?

13. This author mentions Merdhin in another place :

“ Though polished my bardic style after Merdhin.”

“ Llathreit vy mardeir uedy *Myrdin*. Awdl i Duw.” 302.

How could his style have been formed from that of Merdhin, if poems, believed to have been written by him, had not then existed?

14. This author, in his elegy on the death of Rhodri, has also a passage, which undoubtedly alludes to the Gododin of Aneurin, for the reasons mentioned above of the similar allusion

sion of Owen Cyveilioc, that is, he connects three things together, which are to be met with together in the Gododin, and I believe only there. These were a mead-replenished army, a great disaster, and Cattræth the scene of it.

“ Woe to Britain, and its society !

From the loss of Rhodri, how greatly suitors will be
straightened !

I was honoured by the mead-replenished army ;

Oh, loss to me ! a misfortune far worse

Than the ruin in the lands of Cattræth could have
caused.”

Gwae Brydain am briodoriaeth

O golli Rhodri neud rhygaeth eirchiaid

Am parchai llu meddfaeth

O golled ym galled mawrwaeth

Gallas drais diredd Cattræth.

Elidr Sais, 348.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

EINIAWN AB GWGAWN, lived between 1200, and 1260. In the poem which he addressed to Llywelyn the Great, often called the son of Iorwerth, he has this passage :

“ Llywelyn,

“ Llywelyn, may’st thou be older, and of longer good
fortune,

Than the venerable Llywarch, with the aptly ready
flesh-piercer,”

Llywelyn boed hyn boed hwy dichwein

No Llywarch hybarch hybar gicwein.

Ein. canu i L. 321.

This clearly alludes to Llywarch Hên, the bard. The epithet venerable, is but a synonyme to Hên, or Aged ; and the wish of better fortune, applies truly to the afflictions, which his poems so often mention. The other singular expression, which more literally means “ that which is sheathed in flesh,” appears to me to allude to, or rather the idea of the expression was taken from, the remarkable opening of Llywarch’s elegy on Urien Reged. In this the bard, in the full ardour for revenge, begins his poem with this apostrophe to his spear :

“ Let me be guided onward, thou ashen thruster ;

Fierce thy presence in the mutual conflict ;

’Tis better to kill than to parley*.

* Archæol. p. 103, and in Owen’s Llywarch, p. 22.

“ Let

“ Let me be guided onward, thou athen thruster;
 “ Fiercely was it said, in the passage of Lech
 “ Dunawd, the son of Pabo never flies.”
 “ Let me be guided onward, thou fierce athen thruster;
 Bitter and fullen as the scornful laughter of the sea,
 Was the war of the shouting multitude
 Of Urien Reged, burning and furious.”

Dymcyvarwyddiad ynhwch dywal
 Baran yn nghyvlwch
 Gwell yd lladd nog yd ydolwch
 Dymcyfarwyddiad ynhwch dywal
 Dywedydd yn nrws Llech
 “ Dunawd val Pabo ni thech.”

Dymcyfarwyddiad ynhwch dywal chwera
 Blwng chwerthin mor ryvel dorvloeddiad
 Urien Reged greidiawl gravel.

Llywarch Hên, Mar. Ur. 103.

Such lines as these might lead a bard to designate Llywarch with a spear, whose sheath was flesh. This apostrophe seems the natural parent of the image.

Between 1200, and 1250, lived PHYLIP BRYDYDD. He has left six poems. In one, called a Contention with the Poetasters, he mentions

mentions Taliesin in a very remarkable manner :

“ The *ancient* song of Taliesin, to the King of the Elements.”

“ Hengerd Talyefin y teyrned elvyd.”

Ph. Bryd. Amrys. 378.

Here is an author, who flourished in 1230, describing Taliesin's poetry as being at that time *ancient*. An ancient song, of course, implies a song written some centuries before the writer who uses the epithet. If about 1230, a bard styled Taliesin's poetry, *ancient* poetry, with what propriety can we say in contradiction to him, that it was not ancient, but had been then recently forged. Surely this bard Phylip, whom we may justly call ancient now, was a better judge of what was ancient in his day, than we are at the distance of almost six centuries after him.

By the song of Taliesin to the King of the Elements, it is highly probable that he means Taliesin's Poem to the Wind, which yet exists.

DAVID

DAVID BENVRAS, lived between 1190, and 1240. He has left twelve poetical pieces, chiefly elegies and heroic odes. One of his odes to Llewelyn the Great, he opens with this invocation.

May the Being who made the splendours of the West;
The sun and chilling moon, glorious habitations:
May he that rules above in universal light, graciously
grant to me
The fulness of the glowing muse of Merdhin,
To sing the praise of heroes, as Aneurin sang
In the day that he composed the Gododin:
That I may celebrate the felicity of the people of the
happy land
Of the chief of Gwyned, the prosperous boundary.

Gwr a wnaeth llewych o'r gorllewin
Haul a lloer addoer addef ieffin
Am gwnel radd uchel rwyf cyfychwin
Cyflawn awen awydd *Fyrddin*
I ganu moliant mal *Aneurin* gynt
Dydd y cant Ododin.
Gwynedd bendefig ffynnedig ffin
Gwanas deyrnas deg cywrenhin.

D. Benyras, awdl i Lyw.

We have here a full attestation of these
points:

That

That in this bard's days there was a poem
called the Gododin,

That its author was Aneurin,

That it's subject was the praise of heroes,

That Merdhin had also composed poetry,

That Merdhin's poetry was then extant,

For the bard describes it as "the ful-
ness of the glowing muse."

That both Aneurin's and Merdhin's poetry
was then highly estimated.

To feel the complete force of this testimony,
let us recollect that this bard was born in the
twelfth century.

This same bard, David Benfras, is also a
witness in favour of Taliesin—for in the same
ode he sings,

" If it had happened to me to have been a prophet,

" If I had the bardic style of the primitive bardic ge-
nius,

" I could not have narrated the merit of his martial la-
bours;

" Not Taliesin could have done it."

308.

Be im byw be byddwn dewin
Ym marddair mawreddawn gyffeyin

Adrawd

Adrawdd ei ddaed aerdrin ni allwn

Ni allai Daleiffin.—Ibid. 308.

It is obvious, from the association of the bard's ideas in this extract, that he deemed Taliefin one of the early bards of his country, and that Taliefin's muse was directed to describe the actions of warriors. It is also my impression, that if Taliefin's fame had not been upheld by works of his then existing, he would not have been so particularized.

The same bard also mentions Llywarch; for in praising one Gruffudd, he says,

“ Gruffudd with crimson'd arms will be likened

“ In the spear of honour to Llywarch, the son of Elidir.”---

Gruffudd arfeu rhudd rydebygir

Greid barch i Lywarch fab Elidir.

D. Benv. Mar. Ruffudd.—320.

The poet Llywarch was the son of Elidir Lydanwyn. We have already mentioned how Llywarch distinguished his spear in his elegy on Urien.

LLYGAD GWR was a bard, and lived between 1220, and 1270. He has left five poems on warlike subjects. Two are odes to Llywelyn, the son of Grufudd, the last British prince who ruled in Wales. In one of these he says,

“ His fiery ravages, like those of Flamddwyn extended far.”

“ Hirbell val Flamddwyn y flamgyrcheu.”

Llygad. Gwr, p. 345.

This is an allusion to that poem of Taliesin's before mentioned, in which it is said that Flamddwyn spread from Argoed to Arvynydd.

Flamddwyn hastened with four bodies of men

To surround Godeu and Reged;

He spread from Argoed to Arvynydd.

Dygrysfowys Flamddwyn yn bedwarllu

Goddeu a Reged i ymddullu

Dyfwyo Argoed hyd Arfynydd.

Taliesin, Gwaith Arg. Ll. 53.

GWILYM DHU, who flourished between 1280, and 1320, in his poem to Sir Grufudd

Llwyd

Llwyd in prison, also alludes to Flamddwyn, p. 409 ; and in the same poem expressly mentions Taliesin, p. 410, and Elfin; and is clearly allowed.

After mentioning that his hero, Grufudd, was a prisoner, he invokes St. David thus :

If mine were the power characterised in Taliesin,
When he fetched Elfin, the breaker of the spear of
conflict,

The impulse should be to the benefit of Grufudd.

Pei mau pwyll ddiau ddyad Ta'yesin

Pan gyrchawdd Elffin par trin trychiad

Pwyll yudd Ruffudd.

Gwilym Dhu i Syr Gruffudd Llwyd, 410.

In the same poem he also mentions Llywarch :

“ The contemplated reverence of Llywarch, the ruler
of a tribe.”

“ Myfyr barch Llywarch llywydd ciwdawd.” Ib. 410.

In his elegy on Trahaiarn, he mentions many bards, and among them, he notices Merdhin :

Good was the fortune of the song to Gwion the divine ;

Good was Merdhin, with his descent from the tribe of
Meirchion.

Good was Llevoed, ever the supporter of morality.

Da fu ffawd y wawd i Wiawn ddewin
 Da Fyrddin a'i lin o lwyth Meirchiawn
 Da Lefoed erioed da radlawn arddelw.

Ibid. Mar. Trahaiarn, 411.

IORWERTH VYCHAN wrote poetry between 1290, and 1340. In his ode to a pretty woman, he mentions Merdhin as a poet :

More precious with the splendid bards every long day,
 Than when Merdhin, of profound learning, sang of
 Gwendydd.

Ys mwy gan y beird heird bob hirddyd
 Na fan gant Myrddin mawrddyfc Gwendydd. 415.

RHISSERDYN between 1290, and 1340, composed an ode to Hywel ab Grufudd. In this he mentions Aneurin as a bard, with whose style of composition he was acquainted, and Merdhin, as an author, whose compositions he possessed and valued.

“ A tongue with the eloquence of Aneurin's splendid panegyrics.”

“ I will preserve, in honoured authority, the memorials of Merdhin.”

Tavawt un arawt Aneurin gwawt glaer.

Kaf

Kaf am urddawl rwyf koveu Myrdin.

Rhiff. i Hywel. 433.

MADOC DWYGRAIG, a poet between 1290, and 1340, has left ten poems. In the verses to a loose woman, he mentions Merdhin, and obviously alludes to his Avallenau. The two first words, Afallen beren, of all Madoc's stanzas, are those which begin almost all the stanzas of Merdhin's Avallenau. Indeed Madoc's poem is a complete parody on it. He mentions Merdhin in it twice.

An apple-tree,

Equally bearing a profusion of leaves was given to Merdhin.

“ Ail yn dwyn rhyddail rhodded i Fyrddin

Madawg. i Ferch. 487.

Shall I become like Merdhin.---Ibid. 488.

Of SEVNYN's poems, between 1320—1378, three remain. In his elegy on Iorwerth Gyrioc, he mentions Merdhin and Aneurin thus : 505—6.

May I have the gift of amusing language,

Large as the greatly-gifted vineous movements of Merdhin's imagination.

The report of thousands is the praise of Aneurin.

“ Maith mawrddwyn gwindraith Myrddin geudawd

“ Medd cyhoedd miloedd molawd Aneurin.

Sevnyn Mar. Iorw. 503---4.

This is a strong indication of Aneurin's celebrity.

IORWERTH LLWYD, who lived between 1310, and 1360, mentions Merdhin :

The eloquent and wisely expressed inquiries of Merdhin.

Hyawdl doethfin holion Myrdhin. p. 506.

and alludes to Elphin, p. 506, on whom Taliesin wrote.

GRUFUDD AB MAREDUDD, who lived at the same period, mentions Llywarch twice, p. 458, and 476.

So David ab Gwilym, one of the favourites of the Welsh muse, in this century, mentions both Merdhin and Taliesin*.

I am sensible that I must have trespassed to

* See p. 8, 51, and 222, of his Works, edited by Messrs. Owen Jones, and William Owen.

my own disadvantage on the patience of the reader, by this long and wearying detail, which has even wearied myself. But such a series of evidence as this, is of the last importance on such a question as the present. A series like this, we should exact and search for, if Pindar or Eschylus had been put upon their trials. It is a series of proof which forgery can never have. It can only attend genuine works, and I adduce it as forming a very substantial part of that column of evidence by which the ancient Welsh poetry must now be supported.

I will beg leave to assist the reader's recollection by a short summary of the preceding.

Before the 12th century, we have found all the four ancient bards mentioned as bards, and some of their observations recited. In one, Taliesin and Merdhin were mentioned as contemporaries, who conversed together. The Avallenau, and the Gododin, were in others indirectly alluded to.

In the works of the 12th century, we found Merdhin's poetry mentioned several times. Once his Avallenau obviously referred to—at

another time his works spoken of as extant, and at another time as being then ancient.

Taliesin is not only several times mentioned as a bard of distinction and repute; but his poems were spoken of as having been seen, and of course extant—his poem on the battle of Argoed Llwyvain was three times alluded to—his Mead Song, and his Mab Cyvreu were quoted.

The Gododin of Aneurin was twice indirectly alluded to.

In the 13th century, Llywarch was mentioned with epithets and circumstances that seemed borrowed from his poems.

The Gododin was expressly mentioned as Aneurin's, and with high panegyric, and as extant. His power of heroic poetry was twice besides alluded to.

Taliesin is mentioned often as a bard of great celebrity, and who sang heroic poetry. His poem to the Wind was expressly named, and as a poem esteemed *ancient* in this century. His poems on Argoed Llwyvain, and on Elfin, were also alluded to, and his poetic powers are
spoken

spoken of as objects of emulation. Merdhin is repeatedly mentioned as a bard, and as having left works of great estimation ; his Avallenau is even parodied, and his style is mentioned as an object of imitation.

I submit that all this must be allowed, to prove that the works of these bards, for which I am reasoning, were in being in the 12th century. On this 'vantage ground I take my stand. It is a great point gained, to shew that this degree of antiquity at least cannot be denied to them. It must afford the reader much satisfaction, I apprehend, to be assured that when his attention is called to these interesting remains, it will not be bestowed on a modern forgery.

The questions now to be discussed will be therefore these. Were these poems fabricated in the twelfth century, or before ; or are they as genuine as they pretend to be ?

That they could not be fabricated in the twelfth century, will, I hope, appear from some of the leading topics, which I shall arrange by and by, under the head of their internal evidence. But I will take the opportunity now, of

requesting the reader to remark, that there is not one tittle of evidence extant, that they did first appear in the twelfth century. It is an assertion, which cannot be proved, and which, therefore, is gratuitous and visionary. I wish to put this strongly, and for this reason. If there were any sort of direct evidence, to shew that these poems were made in the twelfth century, then all the good effect I could hope to gain, by adducing facts and reasoning, in order to place them in the sixth, would be, that I should present one mass of testimony against another mass of testimony. It would be a case of opposing probabilities. It would be, like what trials about horses, footways, and boundaries too commonly are ; I mean a competition of evidence, in which the court and jury can hardly discern which side they ought in justice to prefer.

But the present argument is not of this species. In considering whether these poems belong to the sixth century, or the twelfth, there is no opposing wall to pull down, no mistaken testimony to refute. The supposition which places

places them in the twelfth century, has not one fact to warrant it. There are the decisive proofs of MSS. and the series of quotations, which I have already adduced, to prove that they must have been in existence in the twelfth century; but there is no document existing that confines them to this century, or that imposes any restriction on the liberty of inquiring to what previous century they belong.

No reasoner, and no antiquary, will allow mere guesses, or mere assertions, to be sufficient to limit them to the twelfth, or to any other age. But finding the ground unoccupied, they will feel themselves free to examine what the period is in which the weight of proof inclines to place the first existence of these poems.

The evidence already adduced to shew that they were extant in the twelfth century, if fairly reasoned from, will compel us to infer that they were in existence anterior to the twelfth. Those MSS. of these poems, which seem to belong to this century, point our attention to a preceding age. They do not adduce the poems as anonymous

nymous poems, which might have been the works of authors of the twelfth century, but they state them to be more ancient compositions. So the bards of the twelfth, and other centuries, who cite or allude to them or their authors, do not refer to them as works of their contemporaries, but as of bards whom we know to have belonged to an anterior period. Therefore the natural tendency of the evidence already stated, is to shew that we must inquire into a period preceding the twelfth for the chronology of their authors.

The next fact, which I shall proceed to substantiate, is, there were bards among the Britons in the sixth century.

It is certainly necessary to ascertain whether there were any bards at all in the sixth century, because if such men did not then exist among the Britons, the question cannot be agitated further.

That there were bards in the sixth century, seems to me to be a position which may be proved two ways; 1st, by inference—that is, proving their existence both before and after
that

that period, and inferring from thence, that they were also in the middle interval ; 2nd, by direct evidence of authors contemporary with the 6th century. I will beg leave to use both species of proof, lest any gentleman should think that the direct evidence is not alone sufficiently conclusive.

IT may be therefore first stated, That there were bards among the Britons, who composed and sang poetry, on the actions of celebrated men, before the fourth century, and in the tenth and twelfth centuries.

The Celtic population of Gaul and Britain was distinguished by a remarkable set of men, whom the classical authors call Druids. Cæsar has described them with his usual intelligence, and if we do justice to his inquiring mind, sedate judgement, and military habit of exactness, we shall not doubt his precision. He says, that their singular discipline flourished most in Britain, and that one of the Druidical practices, was to commit to memory a great number of *verses*. (1.) Other authors have discriminated the Druids into three sorts of persons, who are named the Druids, the Oyates

(1.) De Bell. Gal. L. 6.

or Vates, and the Bards. These three orders are stated by Strabo, (2.) by Diodorus Siculus, (3.) by Mela, (4.) and Ammianus Marcellinus (5.) The Bards are called poets, and composers of hymns, by Strabo; and they sung to instruments like Lyres, according to Diodorus. Lucan also mentions them as celebrating the deeds of their heroes in verse. His words, literally translated, are, “ You also, ye
“ Vates, who transmit to immortality by your
“ praises the spirits of the brave, of those slain
“ in battle; Bards! ye may securely pour your
“ numerous songs.” (6.)

Other authors speak of them in the same strain. Appian exhibits a Bard as celebrating a king for his descent, (7.) as well as for his wealth and courage; and Posidonius declares that the Celts carried Bards with them, as the companions of their table, who sang their praises. (8.)

(2.) Geog. l. 4. p. 197—302. (3.) l. 5. p. 213—308.
(4.) l. p. (5.) l. 15. p. 75. (6.) l. 1. (7.) In his
Celtico. (8.) Ath. Diep. l. 6. p. 246.

Some of these authors lived before the first century ; some afterwards. Marcellinus, who flourished in the fourth, says, “ The Bards
“ chanted in heroic verses, to the sweet notes of
“ the lyre, the brave deeds of the illustri-
“ ous.” (9.)

That these singular people had a degree of knowledge among them, which is not common to barbarous nations, is clear from what Strabo, Cæsar, and Mela state of the Druids. Strabo, after mentioning the Bards, says, that the Ovates sacrifice and contemplate the nature of things, and that the Druids, besides the study of nature, dispute concerning moral philosophy. They thought that neither the souls of men, nor the world, would be destroyed, though they would suffer at some period from fire and water. (10.) Cæsar (11.) and Mela (12.) declare that they disputed and taught their youth about the stars and their motion, the magnitude of the world, the nature of things, and the power and energy of the immortal Gods.

(9.) l. 15. c. 9. p. 73. (10.) l. 4. p. 302. (11.) l. 6.
(12.) l. 3. c. 2. p. 243.

That

That Bards existed in Britain in and before the tenth century, is obvious to all who inspect the laws of Howel Dha. He reigned soon after the year 900 (13.) His laws not only mention the Bards, but speak of them as a regular and established order of men. They are described as being in an organised state in different ranks and degrees, with various duties and emoluments assigned to them, and as forming an important and respected part of the royal household.

The one called Bardd Teulu, was the Bard of the family. There was also a Bardd Cadeirioc, who was superior to the others. (14.) He is also called the Pencerdd, the chief of song; and he was the Bard who had obtained the Cadair (15.) The other Bards were in some degree subjected to him, for no Bard was to ask for any thing without his leave, while he held the office, excepting Bards from other sovereignties (16.)

(13.) He went to Rome in 926. (14.) Leges Howel, p. 36. (15.) Ibid. 68. (16.) Ibid. 69.

At

At the three principal feasts, the family Bard was to sit near the Penteulu, the head of the household (17). The importance of this position, we may estimate by observing a preceding law, which dictates that the Penteulu was to be the king's son, or nephew, or brother, or a person of suitable dignity (18.) He was to give the harp to the Bard, who was to sing to him whenever he pleased (19.) The Bardd Cadeirioc was one of the fourteen who sat at the king's table, near the judge of the court (20.)

The family Bard enjoyed free land, a horse, and cloathing from the king and queen (21.) He was supported by the Penteulu, and had other privileges.

When songs were required, the Bardd Cadeirioc was to sing first the praise of God, then of the king; after him, the family Bard displayed his powers. When an army was ready to engage, the Bard was to sing the "Unben-

(17.) Leges Howel, 35. (18.) Ibid. 15. (19.) Ibid. 16, 17. (20.) Ibid. 14. (21.) Ibid. 35.

“iaeth Prydain.” The monarchy of Britain. (22.)

If we advance to the 12th century, we find the most decisive evidence of their continuing existence and credit. Giraldus Cambrensis, who was born in 1150, mentions, that on a certain day, Llewelyn, prince of Gwynedh, held a great court, at which all his nobles were present. At the end of the dinner, a man of eloquence came forward. Giraldus adds, “He was of that kind, which, in the British, “as well as in the Latin language, are called “*bards*.” (23.)

That these bards applied their muse to historical purposes, is proved by the speech of the Welsh prince, who says, “As long as Wales “shall stand, this noble deed will be transmitt-

(22.) p. 36. See more of them, p. 29, 68, 69.

(23.) “Processit in fine prandii coram omnibus vir quidam lingue dicacis, cujusmodi linguâ Britannicâ sicut “et latinâ *Bardi* dicuntur unde Lucanus plurima concreti “fuderunt carmina *Bardi*.”

Giraldus de jure et statu Menev. Ecc. ap. Wharton’s Anglia Sacra, Vol. II. p. 559.

H

“ted



“ted with deserved praises and applauses by
 “historical writings, and *by the mouths of those*
 “*singing.*” (24.)

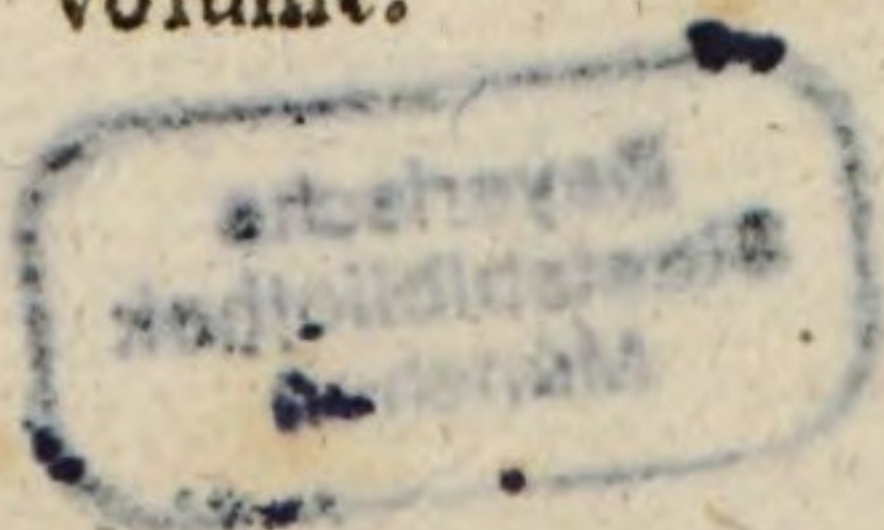
But if we appeal to the Welsh libraries, we shall find that there are poems now remaining of many Bards who lived in the twelfth century. I will name the Bards, and note the pages which their works occupy in the Welsh Archaology, (25.) and the times wherein they flourished.

1120—1160	Meilyr,	page 189
1150—1190	Gwalchmai,	193
1150—1200	Cynddelu,	204
1150—1197	Owain Cyveiliawg,	265
1150—1200	Daniel ab Ll. Mew,	269
1160—1220	Gwynvardd Brycheiniawg,	269
1160—1220	Gwilym Ryvel,	274
1140—1172	Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd,	275
1160—1220	Llywarch ab Llywelyn,	279
1170—1220	Meilyr ab Gwalchmai,	329
1170—1220	Einiawn ab Gwalchmai,	329

(24.) Quod, quamdiu Wallia stabit, nobile factum hujus et per historias scriptas et *per ora canentium* dignis per tempora cuncta laudibus atque preconiiis efferretur.
 Girald. Ib.

(25.) In the first volume.

1160



1160—1210	Seifyll,	338
1160—1220	Elidyr Sais,	345
1170—1210	Dewi Mynyw,	543

The succeeding centuries abound with Bards whose works are also extant. I will mention only the poets of the following, or thirteenth century, to give the reader an idea of the Welsh poetry extant.

1230—1280	Llywelyn Vardd,	355
1250—1290	Bleddyn Vardd,	363
1210—1260	Grufudd ab Gwrgeneu,	373
1200—1250	Phylip Brydydd,	375
1210—1260	Prydydd Bychan,	379
1230—1270	Einiawn ab Madawg Rha- hawd,	391
1270—1320	Gwerneg ab Clydno,	392
1240—1280	Hywel Voel ab Griffri,	392
1260—1300	Grufudd ab yr Ynad Coch,	394
1220—1300	Madawg ab Gwallter,	404
1280—1320	Gwilym Dhu,	408
1280—1330	Llywelyn Brydd Hodnaut,	412
1280—1330	Hillyn,	413
1290—1340	Iorwerth Vychan,	414

1290—1340	Llywelyn Dhu,	416
1290—1340	Llywarch Llaety,	416
1290—1340	Casnodyn,	421
1290—1340	Rhifferdyn,	428
1290—1340	Gruffud ab D. ab Tudor,	477
1290—1340	Madawg Dwygraig,	481

There are as many Bards in the two subsequent centuries.

5th, That there were similar Bards in the sixth centuries.

Whoever maturely weighs the circumstances adduced in the preceding argument, will not be unwilling to admit this assertion the moment it is made. Because, if they do not warrant the inference, that Bards *continued* to be in Britain, during the centuries between the fourth and tenth, what a strange supposition must be made? They are proved to have existed here before the fourth, in the tenth, twelfth, and following centuries. To reconcile with these facts a denial of their existence in the sixth, we must believe, that after having flourished in the island, they became extinct; that they re-appeared again about the tenth, to vanish again, and resuscitate in the twelfth century, since which period they have remained till near our times. To explain the frequent vanishings and re-appearances of these apparitions by reasoning or history, will certainly be found much more difficult, than to

admit the probable inference, that they never disappeared at all, but continued to flourish, from the fourth century to the twelfth; an inference which the laws of Howel corroborate, because the Bards appear there in a character of much dignity and credit, with every appearance of a long previous establishment.

That there were Bards in the sixth century is a more credible fact than even their authenticated existence in the first. Because, between these periods, the Roman conquest and colonization of the island took place. The Romans continued in Britain till the beginning of the fifth century. And it is expressly stated by Tacitus, of one of their governors, what is probable of most of his successors, that his policy was directed to improve and civilize the Britons. Now it would be a new discovery to make, that Roman civilization would diminish the knowledge or intellectual talents of a semi-barbarous people. Surely, if there had been any literary talent in Britain before the Romans came, it would be rather augmented, than destroyed, by the literature
and

and intercourse of this polished nation for almost 400 years.

The continuity of the bardic profession, from the days of Cæsar, to more recent times, appears to me to be strongly intimated by the continued use and application of the term Bards to the Welsh poets during all the interval. Strabo, Diodorus, and Posidonius, called the poets of the Celtic nations, Bardoi. Lucan, and Marcellinus, Bardi. The laws of Howel Dha exhibits the Welsh poets of the tenth century under the same name of Bardd. Giraldus, in the twelfth century, attests that they then also bore the same appellation, and all the Welsh poems and authors existing, designate them through every age by the same term. So indigenous is this word in the Welsh language, that it is the root of twenty-two combinations, all alluding to the original meaning. We have also the evidence of a Roman author, that the word was borrowed from the Celtic in Gaul, from which Britain was peopled. Sextus Pompeius Festus says, that Bardus is a word which, in ancient Gaul, signified finger, a

man who sung the praises of the brave. He adds, that it was derived from their order of Bards. (1.)

Two great events happened in Britain in the fifth century, which peculiarly tended to inspire and perpetuate its Bards. One was the secession of the Britons from the Roman government, and the assertion of their independence, about the year 410. (2.) The other was the invasion of the Saxons. What subjects could have given to poetry more energy and importance than these incidents. The Bardic genius must not only have burnt with new zeal and inspiration, but the chiefs must have more liberally encouraged, and the people more enthusiastically applauded it.

We have one direct evidence that there were British poets in the sixth century, who sung the praises of the Great, in a casual passage of Venantius Fortunatus. In panegyricising the

(1.) Bardus, Gallice cantor appellatur, qui virorum forum laudes canit: a gente Bardorum. Gloss.

(2.) See History of Anglo-Saxons, Vol. 1. p. 124.

Dux Lupus, he tells him, that the British
Chrotta, sings him

Romanus que lyra plaudat tibi, barbarus harpa
Græcus anhillata, *cbrotta* Britanna canat. (3.)

This was the ancient Welsh crwth, a sort of
violin. It is mentioned in the laws of Howel
Dha. It is probably the same to which Cuth-
bert, in the eighth century, the pupil of our
venerable Bede, alludes. “ I should like to
“ have a cytharista who could play on the ci-
“ thara, which we call *Rottæ*, because I have
“ a cithara (4.)

There are two passages of Gildas, who, as
well as Fortunatus, lived in the sixth century,
which seem to me to be meant of Bards. The
first is a part of his violent declamation against
the British kings. (5.) “ By their erected

(3.) L. vii. p. 169. ed. Mogunt. 1617.

(4.) 16 Bibl. Mag. p. 88.

(5.) “ Arrecto aurium auscultantur captu non Dei
laudes canora Christi tyronum voce suaviter modulante,
pneumaque ecclesiasticæ melodix; sed propriæ (que nihil
sunt) furciferorum referto mendaciis simulque spumanti
flegmate—preconum ore, ritu bacchantium concrepante.

Gildas, Epist. p. 13. Ed. Gale.

“ greediness

“greediness of ears are heard not the praises of
“God, from the tuneful voice of the youths
“of Christ sweetly modulating, and the spirit
“of ecclesiastical melody; but *their own praises,*
“which are nothing, *from the mouths of scoun-*
“*drel proclaimers, full of lies, foaming with ar-*
“*dour together, and braying it like bacchanals.*”

If we consider the passage, I think we must perceive that it is an intended contrast between two sorts of vocal music, the ecclesiastical, and that used before chieftains. The first is described with smooth and applausive epithets: the other is not described, but is branded with angry phrase. Now if we recollect the enmity which at all times subsisted between the Welsh bards and the Monks; the custom of the bards, to sing at the feasts the praises of their chiefs; the direction in Howel's laws, that they should do so; and the very virulent phraseology in which Gildas indulges throughout his epistle; I presume it will not be incorrect to say, that he alludes to bards in this paragraph. Gildas is not the first man to whom Bards and secular music have been offensive. If Plato could
banish

banish Homer ; if a prince, to whom Ariosto presented his poems, could ask him where the devil he got such fooleries ; if the monks, in the middle ages, could so abuse the minstrels, and they the monks, as we know they reciprocally did, we shall not be surpris'd that Gildas called the bards scoundrels, and censur'd their encomiastic songs, as bacchanalian uproar. (6.)

In another passage, he says, amidst his inculpation of the British clergy, that they were slow to hear the precepts of the Saints ; “ but
“ strenuous and intent to listen to idle things and

(6.) A passage in the Cyvoesi Merdhin shews, that if Gildas talked with fury of the Bards of this period, they were as angry with the Monks ; for Merdhin says,

I will not receive the sacrament
From the detestable Monks,
With their gowns on their haunches :
May the sacrament be administered to me by God
himself.

Ny chymmeraf gymun
Gan ysgymun Veneich
Ac eu tuygeu ar eu clun
Am cymuno Daw • hun.—Arch. 149.

“ the

“the foolish fables of secular men *.” What were these recited fables of the secular men, for which the clergy deserted their religious reading? Is it any undue construction of the words, to suppose they meant the compositions of the bards?

But why should it be supposed that the Britons had not bards in the sixth and seventh centuries? The Franks then had poets—the Saxons had poets—the Irish had poets †. Let us, then, not deny them to the Welsh!

* “Ad præcepta sanctorum—oscitantes ac stupidos et ad ludicra et ineptas secularium hominum fabulas—strenuos et intentos.”—Gildas, p. 23.

† Bede, in his Life of St. Patrick, mentions two poets in Ireland in the time of the saint. “In Memoria Dubtag poetam optimum---quidam adolescens poeta nomine Pheg.” Bede’s Works, III. p. 320.

6th, That Aneurin, Talieffin, Llywarch Hên, and Merdhin, were British bards, who lived in the sixth century, and who left poems like those already mentioned to have been published as theirs.

If these authors had been Persians, instead of Britons, to what authorities should we have referred for information concerning them? Unquestionably to Persian writers—that is, to the writers of the country where they resided—to writers in the language which they used.

What information shall we be able to obtain concerning Calidas, the author of *Sacountala*, a Sanscreeet drama, but from Sanscreeet writers. By what authorities could we examine the genuineness of any writings ascribed to Con-fu-tse, but by Chinese. If any thing could be found about them in the literature of the nations bordering on China, it would be an additional treasure,

treasure, but it would not be deemed an indispensable requisite. It is therefore obvious, that from the very nature of the case, we must expect to find our proofs of the existence and writings of the Welsh bards, in Welsh authors. It is from among the people for whom they were written; and by whom only they were read or valued, that we must deduce their attestations. We cannot expect to find them noticed by Anglo-Saxons, whom they hated, dreaded, and shunned; and who, as I have already shewn, though sufficiently barbarous themselves, yet thought they had a right to stigmatize Welsh words as barbarous expressions. If Bede had understood Welsh, he would not have disgraced his taste by such large extracts from Gildas. Bede has neither mentioned the Welsh bards, nor the Saxon poets of his time, except the two who were Monks; I mean Cedmon, and Aldhelm.

It would not be very easy to prove the existence of any individual poet of these distant periods. There were both Frankish and Saxon poets, but their names have not appeared in
history,

history, and cannot now be recovered. How many of the poets and minstrels of Europe are only known by some lays having been transmitted to us under their names; but of their existence, what external evidence can be brought?

There is a very long and curious Saxon poem in existence, which of course must have had an author, and have been written in the Saxon times; and yet the poem is mentioned in no writing that has survived to us, nor is the name of its parent known. It is a poem in 40 sections, and occupying 140 MS. pages. It describes the wars which Beowulf, a Dane of the Scyldinga race, waged against the reguli of Sweden. It is in the Cotton library, Vitellius, A. 15. Wanley calls it a tractatus nobilissimus—an egregium exemplum of the Anglo-Saxon poetry; and so it is. But if any one should take it into his head to pronounce it to be a forgery, and should call upon its advocates to prove its genuineness, how could this be done by any external evidence? How could it be defended by facts taken from other authors, when

when no other writing mentions it? It could only be supported by some arguments from the antiquity of the writing; from its internal evidence, and the improbability of any person having had sufficient inducements to commit the fraud.

I put these observations merely to shew the difficulty of proving even those compositions to be genuine, which no one will dispute.— Greater proofs, in favour of the Welsh bards, must not be expected, than such as the nature of the case will admit us to obtain.

Now the reader will have the goodness to recollect the numerous citations made in some pages preceding, from the Welsh bards of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Most of these were so many distinct assertions of the existence of these four ancient bards. In most of them, one or other of these bards were quoted by name, and consequently such passages are so many proofs of the belief of their authors, that these ancient bards existed. To say that these witnesses were Welshmen, cannot invalidate their testimony; because, as I have already intimated,

intimated, by whom can we expect to find the ancient Welsh bards quoted, but by Welshmen?

We cannot expect to find these Welsh bards noticed by the Anglo-Saxons. I have already given a very striking proof of the contempt of the Anglo-Saxons for the Welsh language, by citing a charter, in which a Welsh word (which was familiarly in use as an epithet of royalty, and sometimes even as an epithet of the Deity,) was expressly denounced as *barbarous*. I will now adduce a cruel instance of the hatred of the Welsh towards the Anglo-Saxons. I take it from the ancient Welsh chronicler, Caradoc Llangarvan.

“The year of Christ, 959, Owain, son of Hoel dda, destroyed the choir of Saint Illtud, in Gorwennydh, *because* he found in it learned men of the *Saxon* nobility.”

“Oed Crist, 959, y torres Owain ab Hywel Dda, gor Llan Illtud yng Ngorwennydd achaws cael ynddi lenogion pendevig o Saeson.”---Carad. Ll. 2 Arch. p. 490.

If the animosity between these two nations produced such effects as these, it will be vain

to look for attestations of any part of Welsh literature among the Anglo-Saxons. The singular fact of Bede writing the history of this island, without any other British documents than the poor declamation of Gildas, which happened to be in Latin, is a sufficient indication that Welsh literature and traditions were not known out of Wales. The Normans were as unacquainted with it.

The circumstances with which these ancient bards are mentioned in the poetical passages, already cited, will, if duly attended to, be found to warrant the chronology which I have given to them. Thus, one states Merdhin and Taliesin as contemporaries, and another mentions Merdhin as having been present in the battle of Arderydd, which we know from other documents to have occurred in the sixth century. Another makes Taliesin contemporary with Elfin, whom the Welsh literature places in this century. Llywarch is mentioned as the son of Elidir Lydanwyn, who flourished about this period.

But

But the ancient Welsh bards are also mentioned in other compositions.

The name of Nennius is well known to us, though his exact chronology is not certain. His editor, Gale, places him in the seventh century. He may have belonged to the ninth.

The ancient, and beautiful MS. of his work, in the Cotton library (1.), contains a part which is wanting in other MSS. This is not uncommon to ancient MSS. The addition in the Cotton MS. is a regular unbroken continuation of the preceding writing, in the same hand writing, with no interruption of line. The first part of the addition is a genealogy, and the latter is some unconnected notices of British and Saxon history. This part may have been his quotation from a preceding author, or it may be the addition of a subsequent copyist. It suits the broken hints, and disorderly composition of the former part, and is so far like the style of Nennius. But whether it be his or not, it is, at least, a very ancient composition.

(1.) Vesp. D. 21.

The author's testimony to three of these bards is decisive. I will first give his words, as originally, but corruptly printed, and afterwards the passage, as properly amended by Evans.

In speaking of incidents in the sixth century, he says, "Item Talhearn Talanguen in poemate claruit et Nuevin et Taliesin et Bluchbar et Cian qui vocatur Gueinchguant simul uno tempore in poemate Britannico claruerunt.(2)" In this imperfect state of the passage, we see Taliesin clearly mentioned among other bards, who flourished at the same time. Two of these others, the Welsh also now recognize, Talhaiarn, (3.) and Cian. (4.) They had bards of

(2.) Gale, xv. Script. Vol. III. p. 116.

(3.) Hast thou heard the saying of Talhaiarn

To Arthur, the pusher of the spear :

"There is none mighty but God."

A glyweisti cwedyl Talhaiarn

Wrth Arthur yrthwaew tryzarn

Namyn Duw nid oes gadarn.—Engl. Clyw.

The Book of Bardism thus states another fragment of this bard.

THE PRAYER OF TALHAIARN.

"O God, grant thy protection ; and in thy protection,
" strength ;

of this name ; but no Nuevin, and no Bluchbar. The emendation of Evans, consists in correcting the names of Nuevin and Bluchbar, into Aneurin and Llywarch, of the justness of which, there can be no doubt. It is obvious, that the transcriber mistook a v. for an r. in Aneurin, which are often very similar in MSS. It is as probable, that Bluchbar was an error of the copyist for Llywarch. So in the surnames of Talhaiarn and Cian. They are also mis-written, and should be not Talanguen, but Tatangwn ; not Gueinchguant, but Gwyngwn.

The probability that the emendations made by Evans are proper, is apparent, when we

“ strength ; and in strength, discretion ; and in discretion,
 “ justice ; and in justice, love ; in love, to love God ; and
 “ in loving God, to love all things.”

Talhaiarn is also mentioned by Taliesin in his Angar Cyvyndawd, p. 35, and 36.

(4.) Cian is mentioned by Aneurin :

Maban y Gian o vaen Gwyngwn.

The son of Cian, from the stone of Gwyngwn, p. 2.
 And by Taliesin,

When Cian had
 Praised many.
 Kian pan ddarfu
 Lliaws gyvolu.---p. 34.

see the incorrect manner in which other names are written in the same part. Thus our Penda is written Pantha ;

Oswy,	Osguid, and Osbui,
Anna,	Onnan,
Oswald,	Osguald.

The British Urien, Urbgen; and for Deira and Bernicia, we have Deur Oberneich.

The passage, which we have cited, as amended by Evans, stands thus :

“ Item Talhaiarn Tatangwn in poemate claruit et Aneurin et Taliesin et Llywarch et
 “ Cian qui vocatur Gwyngwn simul uno tempor
 “ in poemate Britannico claruerunt.”

I consider this, as one authority, very respectable from its antiquity, for the existence of Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch, as distinguished poets, and as contemporaries.

2nd, There is another curious attestation of Taliesin in an ancient MS. of the laws of Howel Dha, in the Welsh school library. The writing has the character of the 12th century. It has a passage which is not in the printed copy, and which, on mentioning the privileges of
 the

the men of Arvon, cites Taliesin by name thus :

“ Ac y cant Daliesin

“ Kygleu wrth wres eu llawneu

“ Gan Run yn rudher bydyneu

“ Gwyr Arvon rudyon yn rydiheu.”

“ And so Taliesin sang :

“ Behold, by the wrath of their swords,

“ With Rhun amid the tumult of armies,

“ The men of Arvon red, and panting.”

This is an important passage. It proves three things : that Taliesin was a poet ; that he left poems on battles, which survived him ; and that he was of such celebrity, that one of his historic poems was quoted in a legal work. I am not certain that the poem has been preserved, in which these lines exist.

3d, To the existence, and high consideration, of Taliesin and Merdhin, there is another evidence in Jeffery of Monmouth, who lived in the twelfth century. Jeffery has written a Latin poem on the life of Merdhin, whom he calls Merlin. It contains some passages of harmonious versification, and many very pro-

faic. It has not yet been printed, but is in MS. in the Cotton library, Vespasian, E. 4. It is addressed to his friend the Bishop of Lincoln. It begins thus :

“ Vatatidici yatis rabiem, musam que jocosam

“ Merlini cantare paro, tu corrige carmen

“ Gloria Pontificum.”

After an introduction, it states the divisions of some of the British princes, and their conflict.

Contigit interea plures certamen habere

Inter se regni proceres, bello que feroci

Infantes populos devastavisse per urbes.

Dux Venedetorum Peredurus bella gerebat

Contra Guennolonum Scotiæ qui regna regebat.

Jamque dies aderat, bello prefixa ; duces que

Astabant campo, decertabant que catervæ,

Amborum pariter miseranda cæde ruentes.

Venit ad bellum Merlinus cum Pereduro ;

Rex quoque Cumbrorum, Rodarchus, sævus uterque.

I will beg permission of the reader to lay before him some more lines, as well, because the poem is not in the hands of the public, as also because it intimates some of the striking circumstances of Merdhin's life.

It states, that in the battle Merlin's kinsman fell. His grief, at this incident, is represented as admitting of no consolation, and flies maddening to the woods.

Evocat e bello socios Merlinus, et illic
Precepit in varia fratres sepelire capella;
Replangit que viros nec cessat fundere fletus;
Pulveribus crines sparfit, vestes que rescidit,
Et prostratus humi nunc hac illacque volutat.
Solatur Peredurus eum, proceres que duces que
Nec vult solari, nec verba precantia ferre.

Jam tribus emensis defleverat ille diebus
Respuerat que cibos, tantus dolor ufferat illum,
Inde novas furias cum tot tantisque querelis
Aera compleisset, cepit furtimque recedit,
Et fugit ad sylvas nec vult fugiendo videri:
Ingrediturque nemus gaudet que latere sub ornis,
Miratur que feras pascentes gramina saltus;
Nunc has insequitur, nunc cursu præterit illas.
Utitur herbarum radicibus, utitur herbis;
Utitur arboreo fructu, morisque rubeti.
Fit Sylvester homo, quasi sylvis deditus esset.
Inde per æstatem totam, nulli que repertus,
Oblitus que sui cognatorum que suorum
Delituit sylvis, obductus more ferino.

In exact conformity with this account of his
madness,

madness, Merdhin, in his Avallenau, which we have, and which is one of the poems in question, exclaims,

“ I am a wild, terrible screamer, affliction wounds me—raiment covers me not.”

From these passages of Jeffery, we get these particulars :

1, The chronology of Merdhin. He is drawn in company with Rodarchus, king of Cumbria, who reigned in the sixth century.

2, That he was a poet, and warrior.

3, That the death of near relations, in battle, occasioned his frenzy.

4, That he fled wild to the woods.

5, That he obtained the surname of Sylvest-
ter, as all these particulars harmonize with the poems ascribed to him, and with the Welsh traditions about him.

I will quote next two passages from the poem which mentions Merdhin's wish to see Taliesin, and that Taliesin came to him.

“ O dilecta Soror, Thelgesino que venire

“ Precipe, namque loqui desidero plurima secum.

“ Venit enim noviter de partibus Armoricanis,

“ Dulcia que dedicit sapienti dogmata Gildæ.---p. 124.

Venerat

Venerat interea Merlinum visere vatem

Tunc Telyesinus.---p. 125.

The two bards then sing and prophecy together. Here is a full testimony to the chronology of Merlin and Taliesin. They are stated to be the contemporaries of Gildas, who flourished in the sixth century; and we must remember, that the ancient Welsh poems also mention their conversing together.

The speech of Merlin, in p. 129, looks like a diffuse imitation of the last stanza of the Avall-enau. It is the same sentiment, somewhat amplified. The Avallenau says,

Sweet apple-tree! most sweet its produce;

It grows in the solitude of the wood of Celyddon.

It will be useless to be in competition for its fruit.

Cadwaladr will come to the conference of the ford of

Rheon;

Cynan will be in opposition, in motion upon the

Saxons;

The Cymry will be triumphant; their chief illustrious;

Every one will have his right, and Britons will be joy-

ful,

Singing to the horns of acclamation, the hymn of

peace and serenity.

Afallen

Afallen beren beraf ei haeron
 A dyf yn argel yn Argoed Celyddon
 Cyt ceifier ofer fydd herwydd ei hafon
 Yn y ddel Kadwaladr i gynadl rhyd Rheon
 Kynan yn erbyn cychwyn ar Saefon
 Kymry a pruydd kain wydde dragon
 Kaffant pawb ei deithi llawen fi Brython
 Kaintor cyn elwch Kathl heddwch a hinon.

Afall, 153.

The passage in Jeffery is thus :

Merlinus ait—

— — Sic sententia summi

Iudicis extitit, Britones ut nobile regnum

Temporibus multis amittunt debilitate,

Donec ab Armorico veniet temone Conanus,

Et Cadwaladrus Cambrorum dux venerandus;

Qui pariter Scotos Cambros et Cornubienses,

Armoricos que viros sociabunt foedere firmo;

Amissum que suis reddente diadema colonis

Hostibus expulsi renovato tempore Bruti,

Tractabunt que suas sacratas legibus urbes,

Incipiunt reges iterum superare remotos,

Et sua regna sibi certamine subdere fato.---p. 129.

This is such a palpable imitation of the
 Avallenau, especially if it be considered that
 Merlin is made to express it, that I cannot
 doubt

doubt that Jeffery had it in his recollection ; and if so, the Avallenau must have existed as Merlin, or Merdhin's, before Jeffery.

This is the passage to which it would seem that Golyddan alluded, when he quoted Merdhin as predicting the restoration of the Britons *. To this, also, I am induced to believe Llywarch P. Moch referred, when he cited Merdhin to the same sentiment †.

We may also remark of this conversation, which Jeffery states between Merdhin and Taliesin, that one of the Welsh poems, preserved as Taliesin's, is a dialogue between him and Merdhin ‡.

4. But Merdhin, who is indifferently called by his three surnames, Caledonius, Wyllt, and Sylvester, of which, the last two are synonymous, is frequently mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis, who lived in the twelfth century. (See his Tracts, published by Camden in his *Anglica Normannica*, &c. p. 870, 761, 839.) Giraldus says he was called Celedonius, from

* See before, p. 37. † See before, p. 64. ‡ Arch. p. 48.

the wood in which he prophesied ; and Sylvester, because, falling into madness, he fled to a wood, and remained there till his death. (p. 870).

But all this impressive combination of facts is not the whole of the testimony, which bears upon this curious subject.

The Welsh have a very singular collection of historical facts, which they call TRIADS. Three events, which have an analogy in some point or other, are arranged together. It is certainly a very whimsical mode of commemorating events, but the actions of man are full of caprice. The fanciful rudeness of the plan, may discredit the taste or judgment of its authors ; but the veracity of the statements, is not affected by the singularity of the form. If the Welsh have never had a Livy, or a Thucydides ; if they have made triads, instead of histories, we may blame the misdirection of their genius ; but we cannot try the authenticity of a record by its taste and elegance, or what will become of our special pleading, our bills in equity, and our acts of parliament.

I put

I put these observations to the judgment of the reader, because a gentleman has seriously adduced the oddity of the form of the triads, as a sufficient objection to their historical verity *. It is certainly a new discovery in criticism, that excellence of composition is a test of historical truth. If this principle be admitted; then the tales of Hawksworth, and the novels of Mad. D'Arblay, must be accredited as historical documents, because their composition is admirable, while the venerable, but rude and rustic chronicles of our ancestors must be discredited for their barbarism. On this principle, Jeffery of Monmouth has written authentic history, because his style has been found pleasing, while our ancient Bede must sink into oblivion for

* "The very form and feature of the Welsh triads, to select one example, would be contemplated as a proclamation of absurdity, if it occurred in any other language; for what can be more puerile, than to build a variety of historical facts upon the number three. It certainly requires no knowledge, either of the Irish, or of the Welsh languages, to pronounce a judgment upon productions of this kind; and our regard for *historical truth* must induce us to *censure* the author who shall build on such foundations."—Critical Review, Vol. 33. New Arr. p. 122.

ever; because much absurdity, and much puerility may be traced in his legends.

But there can be no doubt, that on maturer reflection, the author of the critique will see the impropriety of his observation; because (independent of other remarks,) it must not be forgotten, that the critical merit of any composition, must depend, in some measure, on its use and object. Now the object of the triads, was to commemorate the events they state, and the obvious use of the form, was to enable the memory to retain them more easily. A triad is an artificial association of three unconnected events, for the purpose of aiding the memory. If the natural associations of events, according to their chronology, was sufficient to make them be recollected, why were such laborious devices as Grey's Memoria Technica invented? Has the critic forgotten the elaborate arts of the Roman orators to assist their memory? Did they not connect their topics with various objects before them when haranguing, and use other artificial associations to hinder forgetfulness? The Druids, we learn from

from Cæsar, made their pupils commit their tuition to memory, and that the ancient Britons should continue the custom, and should use the form of triads to assist the memory, cannot be thought either absurd or inconsistent.

I hope the reader will pardon me for a moment's digression, if I attempt to shew that the form of triads is by no means so "remarkably foreign to good sense." I cannot do this better, than by citing a few of the Welsh poetical triads, which the youths, who aspired to be bards, were directed to commit to memory, to direct their judgment, and assist their composition. Surely they will be allowed to contain many valuable observations, expressed with singular brevity.

The three foundations of genius: The gift of God, human exertion, and the events of life.

The three first requisites of genius: An eye to see nature, a heart to feel it, and a resolution that dares follow it.

The three things indispensable to genius: Understanding, meditation, and perseverance.

The three things that ennoble genius : Vigour, discretion, and knowledge.

The three tokens of genius : Extraordinary understanding, extraordinary conduct, and extraordinary exertion.

The three things that improve genius : Proper exertion, frequent exertion, and successful exertion.

The three things that support genius : Prosperity, social acquaintance, and applause.

The three things that will ensure praise : Amiable manners, scientific learning, and pure morals.

The three qualifications of poetry : Endowment of genius, judgment from experience, and felicity of thought.

The three pillars of judgment : Bold design, frequent practice, and frequent mistakes.

The three pillars of learning : Seeing much, suffering much, and studying much.

The three pillars of happiness : To suffer contentedly, to hope that it is coming, to believe that it will arrive.

The three ornaments of thought : Perspicuity, correctness, and novelty.

The three embellishments of song : Fine invention, happy subject, and a masterly harmonious composition.

The three properties of song : Correct fancy, correct order, and correct metre.

The three ends of song : To improve the understanding, to improve the heart, and to soothe the reflection.

The three things which constitute a poet : Genius, knowledge, impulse.

The

The three honours of a poet: Strength of imagination, profundity of learning, and purity of morals*.

I would ask the reader, if these triads do not contain much wisdom, and also express it with emphatic conciseness?

But it is the triads which are called historical, which furnish attestations of the four bards above-mentioned.

The historical triads have been obviously put together at very different periods. Some appear very ancient. Some allude to circumstances about the first population, and early history of the island, of which every other memorial has perished. The Triads were noticed by Camden with respect. Mr. Vaughan, the antiquary of Hengurt, refers them to the seventh century. Some may be the records of more ancient traditions, and some are of more recent date. I think them the most curious, on the whole, of all the Welsh remains.

* These triads are, in the ancient MS. called the Book of Bardism. I select them from Mr. Owen's preface to his Llywarch Hên, with a few slight variations in the translation.

Lhwyd states that there are two MSS. of these historical triads. One in the red book of Hergest, imperfect, written on parchment in the 14th century. It consists of two chapters. One simply called Trioedh, or Triads. The other, entitled Trioedh y meirch, the triads of the horses.

Another MS. of the triads, written about the same time, is in the Hengurt library. There are many other MSS. of the triads in the Welsh collections. The following extract from the preface of the editors of the Welsh Archaiology, may not be inapplicable cited.

“ The triads may be considered amongst the
“ most valuable and curious productions pre-
“ served in the Welsh language ; and they
“ contain a great number of memorials of the
“ remarkable events which took place among
“ the ancient Britons. Unfortunately, how-
“ ever, they are entirely deficient with respect
“ to dates ; and, considered singly, they are
“ not well adapted to preserve the connection
“ of history. Yet a collection of triads, com-
“ bined together as these are, condense more
“ information

“ information into a small compass, than is to
 “ be accomplished perhaps by any other me-
 “ thod; and consequently, such a mode of
 “ composition is superior to all others for the
 “ formation of a system of tradition.”

The historical triads, distinctly and expressly
 mention all the bards whose works we defend.

TRIAD 92d.

The three chief bards of the Isle of Britain.

Merdhin Emrys;

Merdhin, the son of Morvryn, and

Taliesin, the chief of the bards. (1.)

Tri phrif fardd Ynys Prydain.

Merddin Emrys, Merddin mab Morfryn, a

Thaliesin ben Beirdd.

TRIAD.

The three princely bulls of the Isle of Britain :

Elmur, son of Cadair ;

Cynhaval, son of Argad ;

Avaon, son of *Taliesin*. All three were sons of *bards*. (2.)

Tri tharw unben Ynys Prydain

Elmur mab Cadair

Cynhaval mab Argad

Afaon mab Taliesin. Tri meib beirdd oeddynt ell tri.

(1.) Welsh Archai. Vol. 2. p.

(2.) Ib. p. 4.

71st.

The three free and discontented guests of Arthur's court :

Llywarch Hen, *Llemenig*, and *Heledd*. (3.)

Tri thrwyddedawg ac anfoddawc Llys Arthur.
Llywarch Hên, *Llemenig*, a *Heledd*.

86th.

The three counfelling knights of the court of Arthur :

Cynon, son of *Clydno*, of *Eidyn* ;

Aron, son of *Cynvarch* ;

and *Llywarch Hen*, son of *Elidir Lydanwyn*. (4.)

Tri chyingoriad farchog Llys Arthur :

Cynan ab Clydno Eiddyn,

Aron ab Cynfarch,

a *Llywarch Hên ab Elidir Lydanwyn*.

38th.

The three accursed deeds of the Isle of Britain :

Eidyn, the son of *Einygan*, who slew *Aneurin*, of splendid panegyric, monarch of the bards ; *Llawgad Trwm*, from the borders of *Eidyn*, who slew *Avaon*, the son of *Taliesin* ; and *Llovan Llawddino*, who killed *Urien*, the son of *Cynvarch*. (5.)

(3.) *Ib.* p. 16,

(4.) *Ib.* p. 18,

(5.) *Ib.*

Tair

Tair anfad gyflafan Ynys Prydain : Eidyn a laddawd
Aneurin Gwawtrydd medyrn beirdd; Llawgat Trwm, bar-
gawt Eidyn a laddawd Afaon mab Taliesin; a Llofan Llaw-
ddino a laddawd Urien mab Cynfarch.

39th.

The three accursed blows of the battle axe of the
Isle of Britain :

The blow of Eidyn, on the head of *Aneurin* :

The blow on the head of Iago, the son of Beli;
and the blow on the head of Golyddan, the bard.

Teir anfad fwyellawt Ynys Prydain :

Bwyellawt Eidyn ym pen Aneurin,

A'r fwyellawt ym pen Iago mab Beli,

A'r fwyellawt ym pen Golyddan fardd.

These two last triads are very curious, as they
not only attest the existence of Aneurin, but
state the particular fact of his violent death,
the criminal, and even part of his genealogy.

Thus we perceive that the triads expressly
attest the existence of Aneurin, Taliesin, Lly-
warch Hên, and Merdhin.

I think, from all the evidence assembled
under this head, I am entitled to say, “ That
“ Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hên, and
“ Merdhin, were British bards who lived in
“ the sixth century, and who left poems like

“those before mentioned.” But although the Britons should be allowed to have such bards at this period, yet, in order that their works should have descended to us, it is requisite that we know,

That the Britons had the use of letters
at this æra.

I believe that no antiquary doubts this fact. The numerous Roman inscriptions, which have been found in the island, prove that letters were used in Britain very commonly by the Romans; and it would be somewhat miraculous, if this civilized people should have continued so long in the island without imparting their alphabet to the natives. But there are also several inscriptions yet extant, which were made by the Britons in these centuries. I will only refer to two. One is the inscription on the monumental stone raised by Samson, who lived in the sixth century *, to the memory of Illtutus. It was found in the church yard of Lantwit-Major, in Glamorganshire, and may be seen in Camden's Britannia, under that county. The other is the inscription on the

* He was born about 490.

stone which Mr. Edward Williams, the ingenious Welsh bard, now living, induced, by a curious local tradition, searched for in 1789, and dug out of the same church yard. It purports, that Samson prepared it as a memorial of king Iuthahel, and another. It was left on the ground, after the discovery, till the month of August, 1793, when Mr. Williams procured assistance to erect it against the east side of the porch, where it may now be seen *.

But if there were bards in those days, who knew the use of writing ; yet, is it likely that any writings of this distant, rude, and turbulent

* It may not be uninteresting to give a more particular account of the finding of this stone in Mr. Williams's own words, as it is a singular instance of the fidelity of tradition ; I may also add, of Mr. Williams's intelligent curiosity.

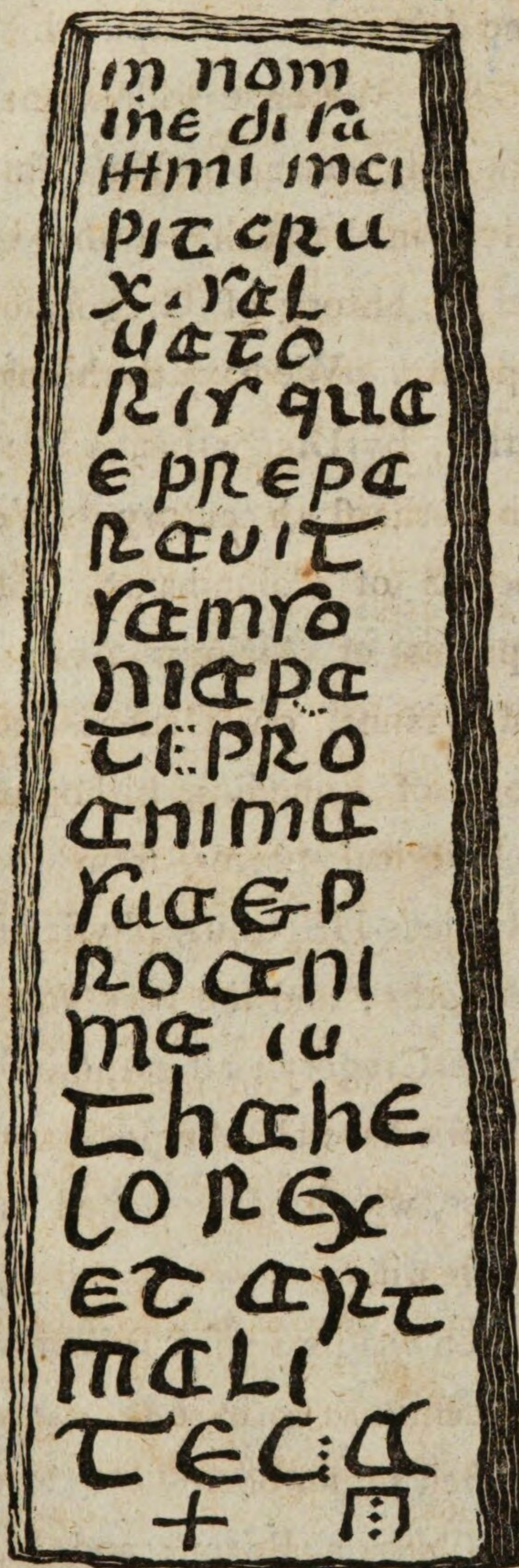
“ In the summer of 1789, I dug out of the ground in *Lantwit* church yard, a large monumental stone ; it is the shaft of a cross, and its history affords a remarkable instance of the fidelity of popular tradition. About 40 years ago, a very old man, his name *Richard Punter*, was then living at *Lanmaes, juxta Lantwit*. He, though only a shoemaker, was more intelligent than most of his own class ; he had read history more than many, was something of an antiquary, and had stored his memory with a number of interesting popular traditions. I was then about twelve or fourteen years of age ; like him, fond of history and antiquities. He one day shewed me a spot on
the

period, should have survived to our times ? It must therefore be proved,

the East side of the porch of the old *church at Lantwit*, where, he said, a large monumental stone lay buried in the ground, with an inscription on it to the memory of two kings. The tradition of the accident which buried it in the ground he gave as follows : Long ago, before the memory of the oldest persons that ever he knew, (and he was then about eighty) for their knowledge of it was only traditional, there was a young man at *Lantwit*, commonly called *Will the Giant*. He, at seventeen years of age, was seven feet, seven inches high ; but, as is usually the case in premature and supernatural growth, he fell into a decline, of which he died at that age. He had expressed a wish to be buried near the monumental stone which stood by the porch ; his wishes were complied with ; the grave was dug, necessarily much larger than graves are usually, so that one end of it extended to the foot of the stone that was fixed in the ground. Just as the corps had been laid in the ground, the stone gave way and fell into the grave, filling it up nearly. Some had a very narrow escape for their lives ; but as the stone was so large, as not to be easily removed, it was left there, and covered over with earth. After I had heard this traditional account, I had a great desire to dig for this stone, and many times endeavoured to engage the attention of several, and their assistance ; but my idea was always treated with ridicule. In the year 1789, being at work in *Lantwit church*, and being one day unable to go on with my business for want of assistance, it being then the height of corn harvest, and not a man to be found that could give me the wanted assistance, I employed a great part of one day in digging in search of this stone, and found it. I cleared away all the earth about it. Mr. Christopher Wilkins, and Mr. David Jones, two very respectable gentlemen farmers, on seeing this stone, ordered their men to assist me, and

we

we with great difficulty got it out of the ground, and on it we found the following inscription:



IN NOM
INE DI SU
MMI INCI
PIT CRU
X. SAL
VATO
RIS QUA
E PREPA
RAVIT
SAMSO
NIARA
TI PRO
ANIMA
SUAET P
RO ANI
MA IU
THAHE
LO REX
ET ART
MALI
TEGA
+ M.

The dimensions of this stone are in length 9 feet: breadth at top 27 inches; at bottom 28 inches; thickness 15 inches.

4th,

4th, That writings of the sixth century have come down to us undisputed.

This is an easy task. We have still extant, a numerous collection of poems, by Venantius Fortunatus, who lived in the sixth century in France. We have the history of Gregory of Tours, his contemporary. We have the heroic poem on the creation, by Dracontius, a Spanish presbyter, also of the sixth century. We have the little poems of Columbanus, the Irishman. The poems of Alcimus Avitus, the archbishop of Vienne, on Genesis and Exodus. The works of Ennodius, bishop of Ticenensis. The historical poems, from the old testament, of Rusticus Helpidius, physician to the king of the Goths; and the very voluminous works of Pope Gregory; all authors of the sixth century. We have also Anglo-Saxon laws of the same times, which have reached us.

But it can be also shewn,

5th, That even writings of a Briton of the sixth century are in our hands, and suspected by no one.

This author is Gildas, a Briton; and his
works

works are in most libraries. He wrote in Latin a little work of small merit on the British history, and an invective against the British kings and clergy, which have come safely down to us. If these Latin compositions of Gildas could weather, unhurt, all the storms of time, surely the compositions of Welsh bards, on the most interesting of all subjects to Welshmen, their struggles against their invaders, might be as fortunate. There was nothing but a little historical curiosity to preserve the reproaching monk, but all the passions, the prejudices, and the reason of Wales, were interested by their bards, and ensured perpetuity to their lays. And why should time have inveterately persecuted these poems more than the works of Gildas, and the other authors whom I have named? Why should the Franks have been more interested to preserve the poems of Fortunatus, than the Welsh to perpetuate those of Aneurin or Taliesin? And if we consider the numerous Latin poems of this period, which have been transmitted to us by the monks, where

where is the wonder that Welsh poetry should have been transmitted to us by Welshmen?

But it can be also proved,

“That in the twelfth century there were writings of old British bards extant in Welsh, which were then called *ancient* and *authentic*, and that Giraldus then found some written compositions ascribed to Merdhin, and which he believed to be his.”

The evidence of Giraldus Cambrensis, who lived in the twelfth century, is complete and decisive on this subject: He says, in his description of Wales, “This also seems remarkable to me, that the Cambrian bards, and fingers, or reciters, have the genealogy of the aforesaid princes in *their ancient and authentic* books, but also written in Welsh*.”

In this passage, Giraldus, who was born

* Hoc etiam mihi notandum videtur quod Bardī Cambrenses et cantores seu recitatores genealogiam habent prædictorum principum in libris eorum antiquis et authenticis sed etiam Cambrice scriptam.—Gir. Camb. Descrip. p. 883.

1150, attests, that in his days the Welsh bards had authentic books, which were written in Welsh, and which were in that age deemed ancient. What is the meaning of ancient, unless it denotes a period some centuries earlier than that in which he wrote?

Giraldus does not say merely that they had ancient genealogies. He speaks of the genealogies but as a *part* of the contents of these ancient and authentic books, and these books too were books of the *bards*. They are not mentioned generally as being ancient Welsh books in Wales, but ancient and *authentic* books, which were in the possession of the Welsh bards and singers. To remark that the Cambrian bards had these books, and to call them *their books*, seem to me to intimate that the books were written by *bards*. It will be at least curious to recollect the evidence of Posidonius before the first century, that the Celtic bards sung the *γενος*, the genealogy of their chiefs: because, if Giraldus found the Welsh bards to have ancient books on the same topic in the twelfth century, the fact mention-

ed

ed by Posidonius sanctions, very forcibly, our arguments of the antiquity of the bardic profession in this country, and gives additional credibility to what is stated in favour of the ancient Welsh literature.

In another passage, Giraldus says that king Henry the Second heard concerning Arthur, "from an *ancient* historical finger *." As I cannot inflict on Giraldus the disgrace of not knowing the meaning of the words he uses, I must presume from his authority, that the ancient British had historical fingers, that is, ancient bards who had left historical poems, which, in the days of Henry the Second, were deemed ancient, and referred to, and which, therefore, must have been some centuries old in that age.

We have another witness to the existence of old British authors in the 12th century. William of Malmfbury, who lived in this period, says, "It is read in the *ancient* ac-

* Rex Angliæ Henricus secundus, sicut ab historico cantore Britone audiverat antiquo.—Giraldus, as cited by Leland in his *Affertio Arturi*, p. 52.

“counts of the actions of the Britons.” He adds, “these things are from the *ancient books* of the Britons *.” If such things as ancient British books had not been extant in Malmfbury’s days, I cannot persuade myself that he would twice have asserted such a fact.

I believe the book of Jeffrey of Monmouth, who lived also in the twelfth century, to be his own composition, and to abound with fable. But I think he would not have been foolish enough to have asserted, that he had translated from a very ancient book † in the British tongue, which the archdeacon of Oxford had given him, unless there had been “*very ancient books*” of the Britons in existence in his time, that is, in the twelfth century.

I think I cannot more decisively prove, that there were extant, in the time of Giraldus, po-

* Legitur in antiquis Britonum gestis—hoc de antiquis Britonum libris sunt.—Wil. Malm. 3 Gall. Scrip. p. 295.

The ancient monk of Malmfbury, quoted by Leland, says of Henry, “Rex autem hoc ex gestis Britonum et eorum *cantoribus historicis* frequenter audiverat.

Ass. Art. 50.

† See him, Ll. c. l.

ems of the sixth century, and of Merdhin, than by a literal translation of some other passages from him, on this subject.

These passages are in his “Prologus in librum tertium Vaticinium,” which is printed by Usher in his “Veterum Epistolarum Hibernicarum Sylloge.”

“In the former books we inserted the predictions of Merlin Caledonius and Merlin Ambrosius, in suitable places, as occasion required. Ambrosius has been explained*, but *Caledonius having not yet put off his British barbarism* has remained to our times, obscure and little known. Hence it seemed to concern our diligence to draw him, by scrutinizing research, from his ancient and hidden shades, into a public and fairer splendor †.”

* Giraldus apparently alludes here to the oracles of Merlin Ambrosius, inserted by Jeffrey in his history.

† Quoniam in prioribus libris Merlini vaticinia tam Caledonii quam Ambrosii locis competentibus, prout res exigebat inseruimus; Ambrosio vero dudum exposito nondum Caledonius Britannicam exutus barbariem usque ad hoc nostra tempora latuit parum agnitus: nostræ videbatur interesse diligentiae tam ipsum ab antiquis et occultis scrutabunda inquisitione latebris ut pulchrius elucescat, in commune deducere.—Usher, p. 116.

The

“ The fame only of this Merlin, furnamed
 “ Caledonius, or Silvester has been hitherto, very
 “ diftinguifhed. The memory of his prophecies
 “ had been retained among the British bards,
 “ whom they call poets, verbally by many—in
 “ writing by very few *.”

“ Performing therefore, the office of an in-
 “ terpreter, and with the affiftance of fome men,
 “ fkiiled in the British language ; I faithfully
 “ expreffed the fentence in every refpect word
 “ for word, as far as the difference of idiom
 “ would admit. But becaufe, as in other
 “ works, fo in thefe ; the invidious art of the
 “ bards adulterating nature, has added to the
 ‘ true prophecies, many of their own ; there-
 ‘ fore, having thrown out and reprobated all
 ‘ that breathed the air of modern compo-
 ‘ fition, led by the love of truth alone, the
 ‘ rude and plain fimplicity of the ancient ftyle

* Erat itaque Caledonii Silveftris folum haftenus fama percelebris ; a Britannicis tamen Bardis quos poetas vocant, verbo tenus penes plurimos, fcripto vero penes pauciffimos vaticiniorum ejufdem memoria retenta fuerat.
 —p. 116.

‘attracted my mind.’ He proceeds to add,
 ‘I have illustrated the darkness of the barbaric tongue with the light of the Latin language *.’”

These important passages of Giraldus prove these things,

1st, That there were, in his time, works ascribed to Merdhin, one of the four bards I argue for, which works were in writing and in the British language.

2nd, That these works had in his days the character of the age of their author.—I mean that Giraldus, a Welshman, found them difficult in their language.

3d, That this Merdhin was then much famed—That many of the Welsh bards had his

* Functus igitur interpretis officio peritis quoque linguæ Britannicæ viris mecum adhibitis, in quantum idiomatum permisit diversitas, verbo ad verbum plurima, sententias autem in singulis fideliter expressi. Sed quoniam sicut in aliis sic in istis bardorum ars invida naturam adulterans multa de suis tanquam prophetica veris adjecit: cunctis moderni sermonis compositionem redolentibus quasi reprobatis et abjectis sola veritatis amica sermonis antiqui rudis et plana simplicitas diligenter excepta mentem allexit.—Barbaræ linguæ tenebras Latini luce sermonis illustravi.—ib. 117.

compositions by heart, and some, though very few, in writing.

Giraldus also states his belief, that some prophecies were ascribed to Merdhin which he had not written. But he also expresses that he distinguished these interpolations and additions by the modern air of their style.

My opinion is precisely the same with that of Giraldus. The prophetic works ascribed to Merdhin, which have come down to us, are unquestionably either interpolated or surreptitious. The fame of his being a prophet accounts for it.

The external evidence for these bards may be now closed.

I hope that I have proved,

That there were bards among the Britons
in the sixth century.

That these four bards, whose works I support,
then lived.

That the poems now extant were in MS.
in the twelfth century, which MSS.
ascribed them to these four ancient
bards, and some of which MSS. we
have.

That these bards were mentioned, and some of their poems were quoted, or referred to, by many British bards of various ages, from before the twelfth century through the following ages to our times.

That in the twelfth century there were writings of old British bards extant, which were then called ancient and authentic. That Giraldus in that century found some written ancient compositions then ascribed to Merdhin, and which he believed to be his, and that a Welsh bard of the thirteenth century calls a poem of Taliesin “the *Ancient* “song of Taliesin *.”

I have strengthened this train of direct evidence, by shewing

That many writings of the sixth century have come down to us.

That the Britons had then the art of writing; and,

* See before, p. 76,

That the writing of a Briton of that age, whose genuineness no one disputes, has confessedly come down to us, and yet the interest to preserve this was inconsiderable in comparison with the feeling, which must have operated to perpetuate these poems.

On this evidence I submit, that unless the internal evidence of these poems is very clearly and decisively hostile to their antiquity, no reasonable man can discredit their genuineness. I proceed to consider this branch of my subject under the heads which I have already stated, p. 19, and which seem to me to be the topics that bear most upon the subject.

THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE :—

That the subjects of this poetry could answer no purpose of interest in the 12th century,

will be obvious to all who inspect them. For what are they? They are poems in praise of

L 4

warriors

warriors who lived and fought in the sixth century. What profit could any one have got by praising the warriors mentioned in the Gododin? And what living chief was interested in the encomiums of Caeawg, Mynydaur, or the other persons mentioned by Aneurin? They form part of no genealogies.—They had not even been Welsh princes.—They were merely warriors in the North parts of the island. What interest could be reaped by any forger taking the trouble to write 920 lines on such an unfortunate conflict as that which is the subject of the Gododin? It must have been forgery for the mere toil of forgery if it was so. The same may be said of Llywarch's long poem on his Old Age, and his Address to the Cuckow. Nor do I see, in what a bard could be benefited in throwing away so many poems on Urien, a Northern chieftain, as Taliesin has done; and, at the same time, leaving unfung so many Welsh kings and warriors, related to the existing princes of the twelfth century.

It

It appears to me very forcibly,

That the subjects of these ancient poems
were the most unlikely of all others
for a forger to have chosen.

We can perceive at once, why such poems as those of Ossian should be fabricated, even independent of individual advantage. In making a Fingal, an irresistible warrior—an Alexander of the third century who only moves to conquer—whose presence is so decisive of a conflict, that in compassion to the fame of other warriors he keeps awhile out of it. In forming such a character there is an obvious gratification of national vanity.

But the poem of Aneurin is one of the greatest humiliations of national vanity that could be exhibited. It celebrates a conflict so disastrous to the Britons, that very few escaped. It inflicts on them the disgrace of going drunk into the battle. That a bard who had fought in it himself and had lost the friends whom he extolls, should compose his elegiac dirges to their memory I can conceive. But I cannot believe,

believe, that if some centuries hence a Frenchman should wish to forge a poem of the present day for French readers, he would chuse for his subject the battle of the Nile. I do not think that an Austrian poet, who wished to impose surreptitious poems on his countrymen, would exactly write them on the battles of Hohenlinden or Marengo.

To make fables as Jeffrey has done on a great character like Arthur is conceivable. To describe a British hero as outdoing even an Alexander in military exploits ; to make valour wither at his approach, and armies perish before his sword, would have clouded the fame of any poem with a suspicion, which scarcely any degree of evidence could remove. But the Welsh bards exhibit nothing of this sort. If we take up Llywarch, we find his first poem is an elegy on Geraint, a chieftain of Devonshire, who did not drive the Saxons to the sea, as a vain-glorious forger would have depicted, but who perished in the battle. Instead of an Ambrosius, whom history would have allowed them to have celebrated—instead of
of

of a Vortimer, from whose actions every Briton had a share of glory; we have a prince perpetually applauded who was really so insignificant as to have almost escaped the notice of history. I mean Urien of Reged. A forger, would not have chosen such a hero; he would not have thought of him. But it is extremely natural, that such a character, even though obscure should be praised by the bards whom he patronized. In their eyes and in their gratitude he was great and interesting, though on the theatre of human action he was very inconsiderable.

If a forger had chosen a subject, he would have selected the struggles against Hengist, for they were so far successful as to confine this invader to Kent; he would have selected the heroes who confronted the formidable West Saxons, that established the Anglo-Saxon monarchy; because the contests with them would have inevitably given glory: but he would not have chosen the obscure conflicts in the North, because they were precisely the least interesting and the least noticed in history of the whole.

If

If these poems appeared to answer any purpose of politics or religion ; if they taught any peculiar notions, on either of these subjects, which the passions of the people or the interests of their rulers in the twelfth century, required to have impressed ; there would be shewn a reason for the forgery.

But the moment we read these poems, we see that no object of this sort could possibly have been in the view of their authors when they composed them. What political purpose could be obtained ? What interest advanced by the praises of the unfortunate Urien, Geraint, or the warriors of the Gododin ? Read Merdhin's simple, yet wild and touching, complaints on his madness, in his little Avallenau ; and let ingenuity discover a single motive, that could have roused any bard to have forged it, or any prince to have exacted the forgery. Men do not forge without some palpable motive. These poems are so simple and so natural as to discover none.

The decisive remark on this topic appears to me to be, that if Welshmen of the twelfth century

tury had forged these poems, it would have been an inevitable consequence, that Wales and Welshmen would have been the objects extolled. But it is singular, that Wales is scarcely mentioned in them, and the most applauded heroes are not Welshmen. Urien, on whom Taliesin has left ten poems, was from a district of Cumbria. The persons commemorated by Aneurin lived as far North as this and some more so. Llywarch has indeed given an elegy to Cynddylan and another to Cadwallon, but his longest elegy is to Urien, and another is devoted to a leader in Devonshire. They, of whom Merdhin principally talks, are also from the Northern Britons. To suppose that Welshmen should have forged to perpetuate the celebrity of other Britons, when there was abundance of Welsh heroes who demanded the patriotic lay, is surely an extravagant idea. Bards usually sing for fame and profit; and if they forged, would most probably have had the same things in view. The enemies of these poems must at least admit, that to forge such poems as these, was the most blundering way they could

could have chosen to the favourite temples of human wishes.

In the sixth century, these poems besides enshrining the memory of the friends and warlike companions of the bards, must have also had the good effect of stimulating their countrymen to imitate the flattered dead, by resisting bravely the Anglo-Saxon invaders. But this great contest had been over for ages before the twelfth century ; it was over before the time of Alfred, and every succeeding Saxon sovereign, made the re-establishment of the British monarchy more impossible. But when the Normans had spread themselves over England, and added another warlike race to maintain the possession of the island, it is ridiculous to suppose, that any bard would have forged a prophecy of the Welsh recovering it. At the very period, in which the forgery is placed, not only Wales was prostrate before the king of London, but even Ireland was bending to his sway.

That these poems could not have been written in the twelfth century appears to me to be clear, from

The

The manner in which Arthur is spoken of by them.

The history of Jeffrey, the composition of the twelfth century, shews us how Arthur was in those days considered. The Welsh, compelled to yield their country without hope of recovery, revenged themselves both on the Saxons and on Europe, by creating a phantom of glory, whose gigantic majesty towered above that of every warrior who had appeared since Alexander. It would be a very curious discussion, to trace the first origin of Arthur's fabulous history, and its gradual enlargement, but it would be too digressive from the objects of this essay. I will only express my opinion, that the apparition either first appeared, or at least acquired its magnitude and its terrors in Bretagne. I believe Jeffrey to state the fact, when he says, he found the history of Arthur in a book brought from that country. Perhaps, if any of the lays or legends concerning the Daniel Dremrudd, or red visage, the Alexander of Bretagne, could be found, we might meet the prototype of Arthur.

But

But that Arthur's fame had acquired a gigantic shape in the twelfth century is undoubted. Alanus de Insulis, was born 1109, and he informs us, that if any was heard in Bretagne to deny that Arthur was then alive he would be stoned : he says, " Who does not speak of him, " he is even more known in Asia than in Britain, as our pilgrims returning from the East " assure us, both East and West talk of him. " Egypt and the Bosphorus are not silent. " Rome, the mistress of cities, sings his actions. " Antioch, Armenia, Palestine, celebrate his " deeds *."

I will allow to any one, that Alanus may be supposed to write hyperbolically in this passage. But Alanus was neither a Welshman nor a Briton ; and therefore is decisive evidence that Arthur's fame had been surprisingly amplified before he wrote.

My argument then is, that if these poems had been forged in the twelfth century, they would have betrayed themselves by their panegyrics on Arthur. Some of them would have been devoted to this favourite of fame. In some the

* Alanus, p. 22.

miraculous feats of Jeffrey's history would have appeared. The very contrary, however, is found. Not a tittle of this vast celebrity appears. He is just mentioned and no more, and mentioned as any other warrior. I hope it will not be indecorous to cite an observation on this point from my History of the Anglo-Saxons.

“ This state of moderate greatness suits the
 “ character in which the Welsh bards exhibit
 “ Arthur; they commemorate him, but it is
 “ not with that excelling glory with which he
 “ has been surrounded by subsequent traditions.
 “ The song sometimes swells with the actions of
 “ a warrior; but it was an age of warriors, and
 “ Urien of Reged, seems to have employed the
 “ harp more than Arthur. Llywarch the aged,
 “ who lived through the whole period of
 “ slaughter, and had been one of the guests
 “ and counsellors of Arthur, yet displays him
 “ not in transcendent majesty. In the battle
 “ of Llongborth, which Arthur directed, it
 “ was the valour of Geraint that arrested the
 “ bard's notice; and his elegy, though long,
 “ scarcely mentions the commander, whose
 M “ merit,

“ merit, in the frenzy of later fablers, clouds
“ every other. As his poem was a gift to the
“ dead, it may be supposed to possess less of
“ flattery and more of truth in its panegyric ;
“ it speaks of Arthur with respect, but not with
“ wonder ; Arthur is simply mentioned as the
“ commander and the conductor of the toil of
“ war, but Geraint is profusely celebrated with
“ dignified periphrasis.

“ In the same manner Arthur appears in the
“ Avallenau of Merdhin ; he is mentioned as a
“ character well known, but not idolized ; yet
“ he was then dead, and all the actions of his
“ patriotism and valour had been performed ;
“ not a single epithet is added, from which we
“ can discern him to have been that whirlwind
“ of war, which swept away in its course all the
“ skill and armies of Europe. That he was a
“ courageous warrior is unquestionable ; but
“ that he was the miraculous Mars of the Bri-
“ tish history, from whom kings and nations
“ sunk in panic, is completely disproved by
“ the temperate encomiums of his contemporary
“ bards *.”

* History of Anglo-Saxons, vol. I. p. 234—236.

Can any one believe, that Welshmen would have forged the works of the contemporaries of Arthur and not have taken the opportunity of celebrating their favourite chieftain? Would not this be contrary to human nature? When Homer wrote his *Iliad* and *Odysssey* he made Achilles, Ajax, Diomed, and Ulysses, his applauded heroes. When Virgil penned his *Æneid*, he gave the lay to the presumed ancestor of the Roman race. When Macpherson wrote his *Fingal*, his hero was all conquering and a Highlander.

That the *subjects* and *allusions* of these poems are such as might be expected from their authors.

Aneurin's poem is upon the fatal battle of Catteraeth, in which he had combated. Its melancholy catastrophe was occasioned by the Britons commencing the contest in a state of intoxication. In this poem he seems to have had two principal objects: one was to celebrate the warriors who had fought with him, and whose merit he sings with all the artlessness of sincerity;

rity ; the other was to impress on the memory of his countrymen the cause of the disaster. It is said, that Homer composed his Iliad to teach the Greeks the ruinous effects of dissention. He may have done so. But it is much more evident, that one great purpose of the Gododin was to display the mischief of feasting before battle. To impress this conviction with irresistible effect, the bard is perpetually bringing in allusions, very much diversified, to the wine and mead, which had been shared by his countrymen. The whole subject of the Gododin announces its genuineness.

The subjects of the Poems of Llywarch Hen, are the deaths of his friend Geraint and of his patrons, Urien, Cynddylan, and Cadwallon, and upon his own old age, and the loss of his children. What can be more natural ?

The poems of Taliesin on Urien and Elphin, were in honour of his two patrons. His historical elegies are on the warriors who were known to him. These I think genuine. Of the rest of the poetry ascribed to him, which is so mystical, as to seem very fantastical, I can
say

say nothing. I leave it to its fate. It is scarcely worth being rescued, unless its mythological allusions could be illustrated from other sources. They are not now intelligible.

Merdhin's Avallenau is avowedly on the gift of an orchard which he had received, but it is full of personal allusions to himself and such of his contemporaries, whom he respected or dreaded. Surely all these subjects are natural topics for such bards to have chosen—too natural—too artless, for fraud to have selected.

Much of the lyric poetry of Horace is of this nature. Many of his poems are on Augustus, and some are addressed to Mæcenas and other's of his contemporaries.

Several remarks may be made on the allusions in these poems.

1. I will not say, that because the author's name appears in the poems ascribed to him, their genuineness is thereby demonstrated. This would be pushing the argument too far. But I may remark, that Phædrus (1), that the

(1) *Phædri libellos legere si desideras*

Vaces oportet, Eutyche, a negotiis.

Phæd. Fab. Prol. Lib. 3.

ancient Ennius (2), and that the elegant Virgil (3), have inserted their own names in their compositions; our Cowley (4), has done the same. So have the Welsh bards of the twelfth century, Gwalchmai (5), Cyn-delw (6), and Llywarch P. Moch (7): I am therefore, entitled to say, that to find the name of the author in any poem is to find a circumstance which has often accompanied genuineness, though it does not prove it. Now the ancient Welsh bards have this feature. Then in the poems of Taliesin, the author says,

I also am Taliesin

Head of the bards of the West.

Minnau yw Taliesin

Ben beirdd y Gorllewin.

Dyhudd. Elph. Arch. p. 21.

(2) Adspicite, O civeis, senis *Ennii* imagini formam,
Hic vestrum [anxit maxuma facta patrum.

His Epitaph.

(3) Illo *Virgilium* me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis otî.

Georg. L.

(4) Leave, wretched *Cowley*! leave
Thyself with shadows to deceive

Love given over.

(5) Arch. p. 194.

(6) Arch. p. 207. 216.

(7) Arch. 301. 322. 327.

I am

I am Taliesin,
With a speech flowing as a diviner.

Mydwyf Taliesin
Areith lif Dewin.

Canu y Byd Mawr, p. 25.

In another place he mentions both his name and habitation, which is a peculiarity rather striking :

And I, also, Taliesin,
Of the banks of the lake Ceirionydd. (9.)

A minnau Daliesin
O lan llyn Geirionydd.—Anrec Urien. p. 51.

So we find Aneurin mentioning himself :

Inseparable has been lamentation and *Aneurin*.
Anyfgarat vu y nad ac Aneurin.—Ib. p. 9.

And,

When the earth shall come upon *Aneurin*.
Er pan aeth daiar ar Aneurin.—Ib. p. 13.

(8.) Mr. Owen informs me that the lake of this name is a few miles West of Llanrwst, in the wildest part of the Snowdon Mountains, in Caernarvonshire. There is a small ruin at one end of the lake, which is still traditionally called the House of Taliesin.

LLYWARCH HEN also occasionally mentions his own name :

My wooden crook ! be thou a branch contented
To support a mourning old man ;
Llywarch—noted for complaints.

My wooden crook, be thou steady,
And support me better.

Am I not Llywarch, from many remote ?

Baglan bren gangen voddawg
Cynnelyç hen hiræthawg
Llywarç leverydd nodawg.

Baglan bren, bydd ystywell
A'm cynnelyç a vo gwell :
Neud wyv Llywarç lawer pell ?

Owen's Llyw. 120.

Sweetly sang the birds on the fragrant tree
Over the head of Gwen, before he was covered with fod,
He broke the armour of Llywarch Hen.

Teg yd gan yr aderyn ar berwydd bren,
Uç ben Gwen, cyn ei olo dan dywarç.
Briwai galç Llywarç Hen.—Ib. 134.

So

So Merdhin,

There was given to nobody at the dawn of day

What was given to *Merdin* before he became old,

A rodded i neb yn un pylgaint

A roed i *Ferddin* cynnoi henaint.

Afallen. Arch. p. 50.

But we certainly gain a material point by having the author's name inserted in a composition. It rescues us from the doubt which must always attend anonymous poetry, whether it may not belong to some other century than that to which we ascribe it. The author's name in a poem narrows the question into this alternative. The poem, then, either must be the genuine work of the author named, or an express forgery made for the purpose of passing to the world as that author's composition. The chances of such a direct wilful forgery, are much fewer than the chances of that possible mistake to which anonymous poetry is liable. But I think that the supposition of a wilful forgery of these poems cannot be supported. I therefore submit that the poems which have the names of these bards, if they were not wilfully forged, must be genuine.

2. That

2. That authors, who were contemporaries, should mention each other in their poems, is extremely natural. Thus Horace notices Virgil more than once, (8.) and Cowley inscribed a poem to Sir William D'avenant. This is not indeed a seal of genuineness, which cannot be counterfeited, but it does not strike my mind as one of those obvious precautions which a forger of the twelfth century would use. I therefore adduce this circumstance as very favourable to the genuineness of these poems. Thus Aneurin mentions Taliesin :

I, *Aneurin*, knew
What is known to *Taliesin*,
Who participates in mind.

Mi a^uwn vi Aneurin
Ys gwyr Taliesin,
Oveg cyvrenhin.—God. p. 7.

(8.) Molle atque facetum
Virgilio annuerint gaudentes rure Camoenæ.
Sat. 7, Lib. 1.

Navis, que tibi creditum

Debes *Virgilium*.—Lib. 1. Carm. 3.

He also mentions Virgil in his Art of Poetry, line 55, and in his journey to Brundisium, line 40.

In

In the same natural manner Taliesin notices Aneurin in his poems :

Aneurin! I know his name,
With his genius of flowing panegyric ;
And I am *Taliesin*,
On the borders of the lake of Ceirionydd ;
May I be blind in age,
Or in the anguish of death,
If I praise not Urien.

A wn i enw Aneurin, 'gwawdrydd awenydd,
A minnau Daliesin,
O lan llyn Geirionydd ;
Ny daliwyf yn hen
Ym dygyn angau angen
Oni molwyf Urien.

Tal. anrec Urien, p. 51.

So Taliesin composed a dialogue between himself and Merdhin, and thus mentions both in it :

Since I, Merdhin, am after Taliesin,
Equally common will be my prophecy.

Canys mi Myrtin gwydi Taliesin
Bydded cyffredin fy darogan.

Ymdidan Arch. p. 48.

3. Another trait of genuineness is, that they
speak

speak of events which happened in the age in which they lived, as passing under their own eyesight.

Thus Taliesin, on the battle of Gwenystad, where Urien Reged commanded, who we know flourished in the sixth century, exclaims,

In the pass of the ford *I saw* the ghost-like men
Dropping their arms in pallid misery.

Yn nrws rhyd *gwelais* i wyr lledruddion
Eirf dillwng rhag blawr gofidon.

I saw Urien's brow covered with rage,
When he attacked the enemy by the white stone of
Calysten.

Gweles i ran reodig gan Urien
Pan anwyth ai alon yn llech wen Galysten.

Tál. Gwenyft, p. 52.

Llywarch thus frequently shews a personal acquaintance with the events he describes. Thus on Geraint's battle :

At Longborth *I saw* the noisy tumult,
The gory biers,
And men red from the onsets of the foe.

In Longborth *I saw* the weapons
Of the warriors dropping blood.

I saw

I *saw* the edges striking together,
Men in terror, and blood upon the brow,
From Geraint, the great son of his father.

In Llongborth I *saw* tumultuous struggling
On the stones—ravens at their feast,
And on the chieftain's brow a crimson gash.

- - - I *saw* a confused running
Of men together, and blood on the feet. (a.)
“Ye that are the men of Geraint, make haste.”

There is certainly an air of reality in this de

(a.) Yn Llongborth gwelais drydar
Ac elorawr yn ngwyar
A gwyr rhudd rhag rhuthr efgar.

Yn Llongborth gwelais i arvau
Gwyr a gwyar yn dineu.

- - - gwelais gymminad
Gwyr yn ngryd a gwaed ar iad
Rhag Geraint mawr mab ei dad.

Yn Llongborth gwelais drabludd
Ar fain brain ar goludd
Ac ar gran cynran manrudd.

- - - gwelais i breithred]
Gwyr ynghyd a gwaed ar draed
A vo gwyr i Geraint bryfied.—Arch. p. 101.

scription.

scription. It does not consist of general phrases which are the common appendages of poetical battles. The images selected seem taken from the tumultuous circumstances of a conflict, which the bard had actually witnessed.

The personages mentioned in this battle decide its chronology. The bard styles Geraint the son of Erbin, and he mentions Arthur as the Commander of the Britons :

At Llongborth were slain to Arthur,
Valiant men, who hewed with steel.
He was the emperor and director of the toil. (b.)

Thus the chief features of this elegy attest its genuineness.

In his elegy on Urien Reged, we meet with the same personal assertions, which it is natural for genuine poems to contain :

I bear a head at my side ; the head of Urien ;
The mild leader of his army—
Upon his white bosom is the sable raven (c.)

(b.) Yn Llongborth llas i Arthur
Gwyr dewr cymmynynt a dur
Ammherawdyr llywawdyr llavur.—Arch. p. 102.

(c.) Pen a borthav ar vy nhu ; Pen Urien
Llary, llyw ei llu
Ac ar ei vron wen fran ddu.—Arch. 103.

In

In his elegy on Cynddylan we meet with an idea which it is unlikely that any but the real author of the poem should have conceived. Cynddylan had fallen against the victorious Saxons, and the first image which occurs to his friend and bard is, that his domains and palace are on fire. He sees the flames arising—he anticipates the calamities which the victorious foe will pour upon the country—he calls upon the maidens of Wales to behold the ravage, and to recollect the misery which will attend the married state from the loss of husbands, children, and property :

Stand out, ye virgins, and behold the territory of Cynddylan,

The palace of Pengwern! Is it not in flames?

Woe to the youthful who wish for social ties (*d.*)

This is followed by another trait that seems to have been borrowed from real nature. It is that the bard recollects a tree—a favourite ob-

(*d.*) Sevwç allan vorwynion, a syllwç werydre Cynddylan

Llys Pengwern neud tandde

Gwac ieuainc a eiddynt brodre.—Arch. 107.

ject

ject—and expresses his hope that it will escape in the devastation :

One tree, around which the twining woodbine clasps,
Perhaps will escape—

But what God wills, be it done ! (e.)

In the Gododin of Aneurin, there are also expressions which indicate that the events passed in his fight. There seems much of the particularity of genuineness in these lines :

(e.) Un pren a gwyddvid arno,
O dianc ys odid
A vyno Duw dervid.—Arch. 107.

I beheld the scene from the highland of Odren :

A sacrifice round the omen-fire which they brought
down.

I saw it as usual on the town of Fledagein,

And the men of Nwythion toiled to excess.

I saw men in complete order, by the dawn, from Add-
oen,

And the head of Dyfnwal, ravens were consuming †.

(†) Gweleis y dull o ben tir Odren
Aberth am goelcerth a disgynnyn
Gweleis oedd cynnevin ar dref Ffledagein
A gwyr Nwythion rygodesyn
Gweleis gwyr dullyawr gan aur addevyn
A phen Dyfnwal a breich brein ae cnoyn.

Aneurin, p. 18.

Taliefn

Taliefin also avows his personal acquaintance with the events he narrates :

Conspicuously before the sons of Llyr at the outlets of
Henvelen :

I saw the oppression of the tumult, and wrath and tribulation :

The weapons glittered on the splendid helmets

Conspicuously before the Lord of Fame in the dales of
the Severn,

Before Brochwel of Powys, who loved my muse,

Arch. p. 66.

Ceint rac meibion Llyr yn ebyr Henfelen

Gweleis treis trydar ac asar ac anghen

Yd lethrynt lasnawr ar bennawr disgwyn

Ceint rhag udd clodeu yn noleu Hafren

Rhag Brochwel Powys a garwys fy Awen.

Taliefin, p. 66.

4. Many passages may be noticed in these poems which seem to have been taken from objects and incidents then really existing, and which could hardly have occurred to the mind of a fraudulent impostor, especially in those rude ages, when the artful precautions of literary deceit were very little understood.

Urien had a sister named Eurddyl. It was natural, that on Urien's assassination, Llywarch,

N

his

his friend, should think of the grief which the catastrophe would occasion to his sister, and that the bard should mention the circumstance in his elegy on Urien; accordingly he twice alludes to her feelings,

Eurddyl will be disconsolate to night,
In Aber Llew Urien was slain (1).

It seems to me to be likewise a genuine, but not an obvious circumstance, that in the night after the battle, in which his patron Cynddylan fell, the bard should feel himself interrupted by the screams of the birds of prey over their dismal repast. Their cries recall to his recollection his friend, whose remains were at their mercy:

Eagle of Eli, thou dost scream loudly to night;
In the blood of men thou dost eagerly swim—
He is in the wood—heavy is my grief (2).

(1.) Handid Eurddyl avlawen henoeth,—
Yn aber Llew lladd Urien.

Ll. Hen, Arch. 105.

(2.) Eryr Eli, gorelwi heno,
Yn ngwaed gwyr gwynnovi:
Ev yn nghoed, trwm hoed i mi.

Ll. Hen, Arch. 109.

Llywarch speaks of an event as having happened on the preceding night. This is a phrase which would hardly have been used in a surreptitious poem :

Gwen, by the Llawen, watched
Last night, with the shield uplifted—
 As he was my son, he did not retreat (3).

Is not the following passage the description of a man, who had beheld the object he mentions ?

When Pyll was slain, *gasping was the wound*,
And the blood on the hair seemed horrible (4).

There is much natural representation in the passage of his elegy on Urien, of the confused state of his army after their leaders fall :

On Friday I saw great anxiety
 Among the baptized embattled hosts,
 Like a swarm without a hive (5).

- (3.) Gwen wrth Lawen ydd wyliis
 Neithwyr, a'r ysgwyd ar ygnis;
 Can bu mab i mi ni ddiengis.

Ll. Hen, Arch. 116.

- (4.) Pan las Pyll oedd tywyll briw
 A gwaed ar wallt hyll.—Ll. Hen, 117.

- (5.) Dyw Gwener gwelais i ddiwyd mawr
 Ar vyddinawr bedydd
 Haid heb vodrydav hy bydd.—Ll. Hen, 105.

The account of the pursuit made after Urien's murderer, is also very natural :

There is commotion in every region,
In search of Llofan with the detested hand (6).

The real Llywarch, seated in the mansion of Urien, when he wrote his elegy, might allude to it as before him, in the manner he does in the following verses, but the images would hardly have occurred to an impostor :

Many a hunting dog and towering hawk
Have been trained on this floor,
Before Erlleon became polluted.

—
This hearth—ah! will it not be covered with nettles!
Whilst its defender lived
It was accustomed to petitioners.

—
This hearth, will it not be turned up by swine!
It has been more accustomed to the clamour of men
And the circling horns of the banquet (7).

The

(6.) Cyrchyniad yn mhob bro
Yn wyfc Llovan Llawddifro.—Ll. Hen, 106.

(7.) Llawer ci geillic a hebawc wryenic
A lithiwyd ar y llaw e
Cyn bu Erlleon llaweddrawr.
Yr aelwyd hon neus cudd dynad
Tra vu vyw ei gwarcheidwad
Mwy gorddyvnasai eirchiad.

Yr

The topics of a forger are more general than these, and more remote from individual reality.

The images of a light fall of snow—of the warriors advancing over it to the combat; but of Llywarch staying at home, from age, have the semblance of reality in these lines :

Scarcely has the snow covered the vale—

The warriors are hast'ning to battle.

I shall not go: infirmity will not let me. (8.)

In the poems of Taliesin, there are some passages which seem taken from the life. I would refer to the mead song already quoted, p. 59, on this subject, and will also adduce another passage on his son :

Yr aelwydd hon neus cladd hwch

Mwy gorddyvnasai elwch gwyr

Ac am gyrr cyveddwch.

Ll. Hen. 106.

Avagddu, my son, also,

The blessed Lord caused him to be formed.

(8.) Otid eiry toid ystrad

Dyvryfiant cedwyr i gad

Mi nid av anav ni'm gad.

Ll. Hen. 119.

In the mutual contention of songs,
His wit was superior to mine. (9.)

This seems a very natural turn of thought for
a parent proud of his son.

The apostrophe of Aneurin to the son of
Clydno, may be also mentioned :

He would slay the ravagers with the swiftest blade :

Like rushes would they fall before his arm.

Son of Clydno ! of extended fame : I will sing to thee

With praise without bound, without end. (10.)

When the same poet, after celebrating the
valour of a hero, calls by name on some
persons who were present at the battle as

(9.) Afagddu fy mab inneu

Dedwydd Dofydd rhwy goreu

Ynghyfamryson cerddeu

Oedd gwell ei synwyr no'r fau.—Talies. 68.

The bards frequently contended with each other for
pre-eminence, and their patrons adjudged prizes to the
superior genius. An instance of these contentions in the
twelfth century, was the competition of Cyndelw with
Seisyll, for the chair of Madoc, Prince of Powys. The
poem in the Welsh Archaology, p. 210, is upon this
struggle. In the fifteenth century these contentions were
very frequent. In the above passage, Taliesin alludes to
those of his times.

(10.) Ef laddei ofwydd a llafn llymmaf

Mal brwyn yt gwyddynt rac y adaf

Mab Clytno clothir canaf y ty

Or clot heb or heb eithaf.—Aneur. p. 9.

witneses

witneſſes to the truth of his panegyric, it ſeems
to me not to be an artificial thought :

When Caradoc haſtened to the conflict,
Like the boar of the wood fiercely he would tear.
The bull of battle—he fell'd them down in the
ſtruggle.

He would allure the wild dogs with his hand.

My witneſs is Owen the ſon of Eulad,

And Gwrien, and Gwyn, and Gwriat. (11.)

The following account of the eſcape of the
bard from this deſtructive battle, may be alſo
noticed as an artleſs indication of the author of
the poem being a contemporary and witneſs of
the ſcenes he narrates :

Men went to Cattræth : They were notorious.

Wine and mead, from gold, were their liquors :

Three heroes, and three hundred and ſixty wearing the
golden torques.

They were of thoſe who haſtened after exceſs of liquor.

There eſcaped only three from the power of their ſwords,

Two war dogs from Aeron and Cynon,

(11.) Pan gryffyei Garadawc y gat
Mal baedd coet trychwn trychiat
Tarw beddin yn trin gomynyat
Ef lithyei wyd gwn oe anghat
Ys vy nhyſt Ewein vab Eulat
A Gwrien a Gwyn a Gwriat.

And I—from my blood spilling by the value of my
blest muse. (12.)

From the passage which I shall next cite, it would seem that Cenau, the son of Llywarch Hên, had once released Aneurin from a prison. In mentioning this warrior, it was very natural that the bard's gratitude should remember and record the incident to which he had been so much indebted; but I do not think that the thought would have occurred to a fraudulent impostor, as the author of the Gododin must have been, if he was not Aneurin:

From the power of the sword, illustrious to protect—
From the fierce prison of earth he brought me;
From the place of death; from an unlovely land,
Cenau, the son of Llywarch, energetic and bold. (13.)
The

(12. Gwyr a aeth Gattræth buant enwawc
Gwin a med o eur vu eu gwirawd
Blwyddyn yn erbyn wrdyn deawd
Triwyr a thri ugeint a thrichant eurdorchaud
Or faul yt gryfiant uch gormant wiraut
Ny diengei namyn tri o wrhydri ffoffawt
Deu gatci Aeron a Chenon dayarawt
A minneu om guaetfreu gwerth vy guennaut.
Aneur. 4.

(13.) Onerth y cleddyf claer y hamuc
O garchar auwar daear ym duc

O gyvle

The expressions which Aneurin, before this, used concerning the misfortune to which he here alludes, have an appearance of reality unsuitable to imposture :

I am not turbulent, or self willed ;
I will not revenge my destiny—
In the earthy house,
With the iron chain
About the top of my two knees,
From the mead, from the festive horns,
From the host at Cattræth. (14.)

It would seem, from this passage, that the bard had been taken prisoner at this unfortunate battle.

It would be intruding too long on the patience of the reader, to discuss this subject in

O gyvle angheu o anghar dut
Ceneu yab Llywarch dihafarch drut.

Aneur. 8.

(14.) Nyf wyf vynawc blin
Ni ddialav vy ordin
Yn y ty deyerin
Catwyn heyernin
Am benn vy deulin
O ved o vuelin
O Gattræth wnin.—Aneur. 7.

its

its full extent. I will therefore only notice,

5thly, Those allusions which relate to the personal feelings of these bards. Fictitious poems seldom touch on this topic, because it is not easy to counterfeit true feeling. I can still less suspect any one before the twelfth century to have thought of counterfeiting it.

In the poems of Taliefin upon Urien, there is a perpetual expression of gratitude, which is far more likely to be found in a composition addressed to a living patron, whom such sentiments would gratify, than to have been used in forged poetry.

Several of Taliefin's panegyrical odes, close with these earnest phrases of attachment. I will cite three :

I also, Taliefin—

May I be blind in age,

Or in the anguish of death,

If I praise not Urien. (15.)

(15.) A minneu Dalyefin—

Ny dallywyf yn hen

Ym dygyn aghen

Oni moluyf Uryen.—Talief. 51.

In the future severe death of necessity,
May I not be in smiles,
If I praise not Urien. (16.)

I am not increafing,
But into age I am departing :
Yet in the severe death of necessity,
May I not be in smiles,
If I praise not Urien. (17.)

Other expreffions of gratitude may be noticed :

There is fuperior happinefs
For the illuftrious in fame ; for the liberal of
praise ;
There is fuperior glory,
That Urien and his children exift,
He reigns the fupreme, the fovereign Lord. (18)

(16.) Ym dygn angeu angen
Ni byddif im dirwen
Na molwyf Urien.—Talief. 55.

(17.) — nad wyf cynnydd
Ac yn y fallwyf hen
Ym dygn angeu angen
Ni biddif ym dyrwen
No molwyf Urien.—Talief. 55.

(18.) Ys mwy llawenydd
Gan glodfan clodrydd
Ys mwy gogoniant
Fod Urien ai blant
Ac ef yn Arbennig
Yn oruchel wledig,—Talief. 55.

Urien

Urien of Reged, the most generous that is, and
will be;

And that has been since Adam: Urien, of the
amplest sword. (19.)

Another paragraph on Urien is :

I am an old wanderer—

I am of cheerful talents—

Silence would be envy.

Be mine the praise of Urien. (20.)

All these expressions are favourable to the
argument of the genuineness of the poetry.

Many personal feelings occur in Llywarch's
poetry, which attest their own genuineness. I
will cite only a few.

In his elegy on his patron Cynddylan, who
fell in battle, he says :

The hall of Cynddylan is gloomy this night ;

Without fire ; without a family—

My overflowing tears gush out.

(19.) Uryen o Reget hael ef fyd

Ac a vyd

Ac a vu yr Adaf letaf y gled.—Talies. 51.

(20.) Wyf carddenhin hen

Wyf cyfreu lawen

Athaw y dygen

Meu molawd Urien.—Talies. 40.

The

The hall of Cynddylan pierces me to see it
Without a covering ; without a fire:
My general is dead, and I myself alive. (21.)

The self reproach of the last line is striking !
Very natural is the following reflection :

Brethren I have had, who were free from evil,
Who grew up like the saplings of the hazel—
One by one they are all departed ! (22.)

In his elegy on his old age, and on the loss
of his children, he has many very interesting
passages :

Before I appeared on crutches, I was comely ;
My lance was the foremost of the spears :
———— I am heavy—I am wretched. (23.)

(21.) Ystafell Cynddylan ys tywyll heno
Heb dan heb deulu
Hidyl mau yd gynu
Ystafell Cynddylan a'm gwan ei gweled
Heb doed, heb dan
Marw vy nglyw byw my hunan.—Ll. Hen. 108.

(22.) Brodyr ambwyad ni vall
A dyvynt val gwyail coll
O un i un edynt oll.—Ll. Hen. 112.

(23.) Cyn bum cain vaglawg bum eirian
Oedd cynwayw vy mhar
—— wyv trwm wyv truan.—Ll. Hen. 114.

Old age is scoffing at me,
 From my hair to my teeth;
 And the eye which the young ones loved. (24.)

I think there is much beauty in the following image of the helplessness of age :

This leaf, is it not blown about by the wind?
 Woe to it for its fate!
 Alas, it is old. (25.)

There is much nature in the following passages, if we conceive them to have been written by the real Llywarch, whose life extended to a long period :

The four most hateful things to me through life,
 Have met together with one accord :
 Cough, age, sickness and grief.
 I am aged—I am lonely. I am decrepid—cold—
 After having enjoyed the bed of honour.

- (24.) Yn cymmwedd y mae henaint a mi
 O'm gwallt i'm daint
 A'r cloyn a gerynt yr ieuaint.—Ll. Hen. 115.
 (25.) Y ddeilen hon neus cynnired gwynt
 Gwae hi o'i thynged
 Hi hen.—Ll. 115.

I am

I am rash---I am outrageous.

They who loved me once, now love me not.

Maidens love me not. I am resorted to by none ;

I cannot move myself along—

Ah, death! wilt thou not befriend me! (26.)

There is much of a genuine appearance in Aneurin's expression of his feelings in this passage :

Miserable am I after the fatigue of the conflict,

To suffer the pangs of death in sensibility !

Twice heavily afflicted am I, to have seen

The falling of our men in all directions,

And to have felt the anxious sigh and grief

For the valiant men of the social land ;

For Rhuyaun, for Gwgawn, Gwiawn, and Gwilyget ! (27.)

In

(26.) Vy mhedwar priv-gas erymoed

Ymgyvarvyddynt yn unoed

Pas a henaint haint a hoed.

Wyv hen wyv unig wyv anelwig, oer,

Gwedy gwely ceinmyg.

Wyv ehud wyv anwar

Y sawl a'm caroedd ni'm car

Ni'm car rhianedd nim cynnired neb

Ni allav ddarymred

Wi o angau na'm dygred.—Ll. Hen. 115.

(27.) Truan yw gennyf gwedy lluddet

Goddef gloes angheu trwy agcyffret

Ac

In Merdhin's Avallenau, there is also much display of natural feelings appropriate to his character. The allusion to his insanity is interesting :

I myself am a wild horrible screamer :

I am pierced with horrors—I am covered by no raiment ! (28.)

The following passages very forcibly display his situation and feelings :

Gwendydd does not love me—she never greets me.

I am hated by the minister of the favours of Rhydderch.

I have ruined his son and his daughter.

Death relieves all—why does it not visit me ? (29.)

Ac eil trwm truan gennyf vy gwelet
Gogwyddai an gwyr ny pen o draet
Ac ucheneit hir ac eilyuet
Yn ol gwyr pybyr temyr tutuet
Rhuvawn a Gwgawn Gwiawn a Gwylyget.

Aneur. 12.

(28.) A minnau wyf gwyllt gorthryfiad
Im cathrudd cythrudd nim cudd dillad.

Merddin, Afall. 151.

(29.) Mi nim car Gwenddydd ac nim hennyrch
Wyf cas gan wafawg gwaefaf Ryddyrch
Ry rewiniais i ei fab ef ai ferch
Angeu a ddwg pawb pa rag nam cyvairch.

Merd. 152.

Since

Since Gwenddolau, no prince honours me,
 No pleasure allures me, no fair one cheers me;
 Yet in the battle of Arderydd I wore the golden
 torques,
 Before I was disastrous to her who has the appearance
 of the swan. (30.)

I heard the rumour in the first dawn of the day,
 That the minister of the favours of Meuwyd,
 Twice, thrice, and four times in one day——
 Oh, Jesus! why did not my destruction come,
 Before it happened to my hand to destroy the son of
 Gwendydd. (31.)

After predicting that Arthur shall re-appear,
 and Gwenhwyvar be punished, he exclaims,
 Worse has befallen me, without hope of deliverance.
 The son of Gwendydd is slain—my hand did it. (32.)

(30.) A guedi Gwenddoleu neb rhiau nim peirch
 Nim gogawn gwarwy nim gofwy gordderch
 Ac yngwaith Arderydd oed aur fy ngorthorch
 Cyn i bwy aelaw heddiw gan eiliw eleirch.

Merd. 152.

(31.) Chwedleu a gigleu yn nechreuddydd
 Ryforri gwallawg gwaefaf Meuwydd
 Dwywaith a theirgwaith pedeirgwaith yn undydd
 Och Iesu! na ddyfu fy nihenydd
 Cyn dyfod ar fy llaw llaith mab Gwendydd.

Merd. 152.

(32.) Gwaeth i mi a dderfydd heb ysgorfa
 Lleas mab Gwenddydd—fy llaw ai gwna.

Merd. 152.

O

I will

I will close this head of my subject by remarking what appears to me to be a striking instance of identity of composition in the works of Llywarch Hên. Most authors have a style, a manner peculiar to themselves. The poems of Llywarch Hên display such a peculiarity, and as all of them contain it, I will adduce it as a proof that they all spring from one author, which is a circumstance of no small consideration in the question of their genuineness.

It is a favourite habit with Llywarch Hên, when an idea has occurred to him, which he feels to be interesting, to dwell upon the idea for a considerable time, and to recur to it several times before he leaves it. Thus, in his poem on his age, his attention having been excited by the staff which supported him, he begins seven stanzas successively with an address to it, calling it, "Baglan bren," 'my wooden crook.' p. 114.

In the poem on his children, which is connected in the MSS. with that on his age, (but in my opinion very improperly, as they are
clearly

clearly two distinct poems *.) The idea of his son Gwen occurs to him. He immediately pursues it for 6 stanzas, beginning each with his son's name. (p. 116.)

In his elegy on Cynddylan, he begins fourteen stanzas with his friend's name. The recollection of Cynddylan's hall, and its deserted appearance, in consequence of the prince's fall, afterwards comes into his mind, and he begins several stanzas with allusions to it, as he afterwards alludes to the Eagle of Eli, and the Churches of Baffa, p. 108, 109.

In his elegy on Urien, the same practice is observable. He describes himself as having the head of Urien at his side, and he repeats the image for thirteen stanzas.

His elegy on Geraint contains twenty-four stanzas, all commencing with one of three phrases. "Rhag Geraint gelyn" introduces three stanzas. "Yn Llongborth gwelais" begin

* The poem on his old age contains (I think) only the first twenty stanzas. I think it then ceases, and that what follows is a distinct and separate poem on the loss of his children, which should be printed separately.

twelve stanzas, and the first line of the next stanza is common to all that follow.

I do not adduce this peculiarity as a poetical beauty. It is certainly not the offspring of taste, or imagination, but is a trait which identifies all these poems to be the works of one author; and this author, from the poems themselves, appears to have been Llywarch Hên. I think I can account for this peculiarity by saying that alliteration was the rage of the Welsh bards, as I shall presently shew, and that in this peculiarity Llywarch was striving to shew how many varieties of thoughts he could put together under the same idea, and connect with the same words. To begin several stanzas with saying "the hall of Cynddylan," is the same idle play of mind, as to begin several words with the same letters. How much of these practices sprang from the Druidical contrivances to assist their memory while they taught their youths so many verses*, without committing them to writing, cannot now be determined.

* Cæsar says of the Druids, "magnum ibi numerum versuum ediscere dicuntur." L. 6, c. 13.

Aneurin and Merdhin have this habit so much, as to shew it to be a characteristic of the poetry of that day. But Llywarch's poems have it to an unexampled excess, which stamps them all with the same mark.

ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE BARDS.

On the language of these bards, it is very favourable to the genuineness of their poems, that though they are written in Welsh, they have not been found intelligible by many modern Welshmen. Evans, who has published an essay on the Welsh poetry, mentions this several times. He says of the Gododin, "by reason of its great antiquity, it is not easily understood," p. 17. Again, "many of Taliesin's poems, on account of their great antiquity, are very obscure, as the works of his contemporaries are," p. 18. In speaking of the poem of another bard of these times, he again complains of the obscurity and difficulty of these venerable remains, p. 49. He says of the best antiquaries and critics in the Welsh language living in his time, that "they all

confess that they do not understand above one half of any of Taliesin's poems." p. 54.

The difficulty of understanding these poems, which Evans so strongly states, and which so many Welshmen have felt and lamented, is just what would be found in genuine poems of the sixth century. I adduce it is an attestation of their genuineness. It is not indeed an insuperable difficulty, because the means to overcome it are open to every one. The writings of one age are the best guides to our understanding those of a preceding. They who are conversant with the poems of the fourteenth century, will understand those of the twelfth, and all who have carefully exercised themselves in the compositions of the twelfth century, will, by patient labour, comprehend and read those of the sixth. Mr. Owen, whose leisure has been devoted to the ancient literature of his country, has facilitated its study to every one by his new dictionary of its language, in which the diction of the old bards is particularly attended to, and illustrated. The circumstance of the difficulty of the language to
modern

modern Welshmen, is surely an important feature of genuineness. On this topic, however, it would be indecorous in me not to speak very diffidently. Welshmen are the only competent judges on this curious point,

It is certainly indispensable to the genuineness of these poems,

That their historical allusions should be true.

As far as I have examined these poems, their historical allusions seem to me to be singularly true. I say singularly, because they present none of the fables which we meet with in Jeffrey.

I consider it as a very remarkable circumstance, that the Welsh bards, and the most valuable of the triads, express or imply a train of history very unlike, and sometimes very contradictory to that of Jeffrey. Such is the difference, that if Jeffrey's facts on many occasions be true, the Welsh bards must be forgeries. If, however, the world be right in its opinion, that Jeffrey is the fabler, then the dissimilarity between him and the bards is a

striking circumstance in favour of the poems.

I have already observed, that they completely negative the wonderful history of Arthur. In abiding this test, they stand a very severe and perilous one, from which, if they had been fabricated, they could not have escaped.

They present another trying test of their genuineness in their general subjects. If they had been only on love adventures, or love complaints, descriptions of nature, or mere effusions of sentiment, they could not have been examined on these grounds, because such topics may belong to one age, as well as to another. But historical poems on men, and incidents contemporary with the bards, are such as forgery can never well execute from the individual minutiae they require, and by which they can be detected the more easily. Will any one impeach them on this side, which if they were factitious compositions would be their weakest?

It would be a task too long for this essay, to shew the justice of all the allusions point by point.

point. I will only add some general observations, and wait for the attack before I make the defence.

1. As far as authentic history goes, it proves that there were such persons as those to whom many of these poems are addressed, or who are mentioned in them. I mean Urien, Geraint, Cadwallon, Cynddylan, Cian Gwyngwn, Rhydderch, Gwendolau, Owen, Cunedda, Aeddan, and others.
2. The British states in the North of the island, which they particularize, or imply, present a curious train of real historical facts.
3. The numerous little independent kingdoms in other parts of the island, which they also imply, and the civil discords to which they allude, were historical facts.
4. Llywarch's elegy on Urien turns chiefly on his murder. That he was
affassinated

affassinated can be proved from other authorities.

An historical objection has been raised against the Welsh bards, to which a mistake gave rise. The objection is, that the Welsh bards call the English Allmyn.

The objection is this. The term Allmyn obviously corresponds with the Latin Alemanni, but “at the supposed period of the bards, the “ terms Allemanni, and Allemannia, were al- “ most restricted to modern Switzerland.” The statement is, that the word passed in late times from the French language into the Armorican, and thence into the Welsh. The inference is, that poems using this word must have been written much posterior to the sixth century, because the term Allemania was not applied to all Germany till a much more recent period.

The answer is, that the objection does not apply to the four bards I have mentioned, because *none* of them use the term *Allmyn*. In a mistake I inserted Taliesin's name to a quotation,

tion, instead of Golyddan. It is Golyddan, not Taliesin, who uses the word Allmyn.

Neither Aneurin, Taliesin, Llywarch Hên, nor Merdhin, has the word Allmyn. Aneurin, in speaking of the invaders, calls them Saeson. Taliesin has also Saeson, and sometimes Eingl. Sometimes he uses the descriptive name of Alltudion, or foreigners. He once has the word Germania, and once Saxonia. Llywarch has Sais, Saeson, and once Franc. Merdhin has Saeson and Frainc in his Avallenau, the only one of his poems that I think free from interpolation.

The objection, therefore, does not impeach the genuineness of these four bards.

I am not, therefore, under a necessity of saying any more on this subject. But as if it be applicable, it will tend to discredit the poem of Golyddan, of which I think favourably. I will make a few remarks on the subject.

To suppose that the Welsh bard used the term Allmyn as the French use the term Allemands, that is, as the general designation of the German people, or with the full sense of the word in the 18th century, is to create a difficulty

culty on purpose to make it an objection. The word as used by the bard has no such meaning, and if it has not, the objection is nothing.

The bard, in speaking of the invaders sometimes calls them Allmyn. This is the simple fact. The only question upon it is, what, or who does he mean by the term? I will presume that the Latin word Allemanni was in his mind when he used it. But who were the Allemanni, not in the 13th century, but in the 6th.

The Allemanni made themselves celebrated by many wars against the Romans and their allies. In 360, and 365, their invasions of Gaul were dreadful, and must have diffused their name in terror through Britain, and every country adjacent.

In 496, they assailed the Franks and Clovis.
“ From the source of the Rhine to its conflux,
“ with the Mein and the Moselle, the formidable swarms of the Allemanni commanded
“ either side of the river. They had spread
“ themselves into Gaul, over the modern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.” Gib. 3, 563.

From this formidable position they invaded
the

the kingdom of Cologne, and the battle of Tolbiac ensued, in which they contended with the Franks for the alternative of empire or servitude. After a long and varying conflict, the Allemanni were totally and irrecoverably defeated. Some fled to other countries, as they who were placed in Rhætia *, and with the Ripuarii, and the rest, were subjected to the Franks.

Thus we see that at the end of the 5th century, the great and formidable nation of the Allemanni was humbled for ever. Whether on their conquest by Clovis, any sailed down the Rhine to Britain, as a part travelled to Rhætia, is not stated. But I submit that an indignant British bard would with pleasure use their name to stigmatize the invaders of his country, because in representing them as Allemanni, as those celebrated warriors whom the Franks had at the epoch of the Saxon invasions defeated and dispersed, he strongly exposed them to the contempt of the Britons. Nothing was better

* Marc. 2, 16.

fitted to rouse their valour than to have it believed that the invaders were fugitives themselves. Conflicting parties frequently give each other abusive names, which become at last almost historical terms; witness the Cavaliers and Roundheads.

That it was really used as a term of opprobrium, appears to me more probable from the meaning which the Welsh language afforded to the expression. Allmyn signifies foreigners, as well as Allemanni. The most usual name for foreigners, in Welsh, was alltudion, from all, another; and tud, a country; but the word allmyn has the same import, for men, and man, is the Welsh for place. Therefore just as all-tud meant another country; so, all-man, another place, was nearly its synonyme.

In the same spirit Milton applied the word Gallus to Salmasius, because it admitted of other allusions besides its obvious meaning.

I think the passages of Golyddan, in which allmyn is connected with alltudedd prove the pun which he intended to make opprobrious.

156. Ef gyrhaut allmyn i alltudedd.

“He would have driven the foreigners to a foreign place.”

159. So

Allmyn ar gyrchwyn i alltudydd.

The foreigners removing to a foreign place.

The word allmyn being understood to denote foreigners as well as Allemanni. Thus it was a contemptuous paromafia used by an individual, to convey strong opprobrium, and also to give that alliteration to the line of which the Welsh bards were so fond.

That the manners which they express are consistent.

In the poems of Ossian we certainly meet with an elegance of sentiment, a refined tenderness and delicacy of feeling wholly incompatible with the period to which Ossian is assigned. The Welsh bards may suffer with the cultured taste for the avowal; but certainly this objection cannot be urged against these poems. These bards were warriors, their songs commemorate warriors, and their feelings and sentiments are wholly martial. I believe there is not one tribute to love in the whole series of
the

the ancient ones. Friendship and grief, and gratitude to patrons, occupy many stanzas; but Venus and Cupid have not received a single compliment. All this is very natural for the turbulent and disastrous period in which these poets lived. In more tranquil times, beauty obtained the most elegant wreathes of the Welsh laurel. Love has sighed in Welsh as profusely as in French, and much new imagery, and much originality of sentiment, abound in the bardic poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

As this essay is intended to be concise, I will only select three specimens of the reality of the costume of manners which these poems exhibit. Aneurin, in describing Caeog a British hero, mentions,

Gwefrawr godrwyawr torchawr am ran.

“With wreathes of amber twined round his temples.”

This singular fact of the ancient Britons wearing amber-beads, is confirmed by many beads of amber having been found in the barrows on Salisbury plain, which have been recently dug. I understand that in several of these

these graves, pieces of amber, like beads, have been met with ; and in one, as many beads were found as would have made a wreath. There are, in the possession of Mr. Cunnington of Heytesbury, who has explored many tumuli during last summer, and whose curious museum of British antiquities, as arrowheads, urns, &c. found in these barrows, is highly worthy the notice of the antiquary. *

Another part of the British costume which they notice, is the wearing the golden torques. Llywarch mentions it, p. 135 :

Four and twenty sons I have had
Wearing the golden wreath, leaders of armies.

Aneurin mentions it several times :

“ Of all who went to Cattrath, wearing the golden
torc, or wreath,

“ On the business of Mynydauc, courteous to his
people,

“ There went not, among the Britons

“ Of Gododin, a man of war superior to Cynon.”

* In one barrow were found beads of amber and jet of various sizes, but corresponding with two horn rings, to which the strings that tied them were probably appended. Wreaths of this sort are also described in Douglas's *Nenia Britannica*.

He states, that in the battle of Cattræth there were

“ Three hundred and sixty-three who had the golden torques.”

In attestation of the reality of this ornament, I cannot do better than cite again from Gibson's Camden the following passage, though it was quoted in the Anglo-Saxon History, p. 222.

“ In 1692, an ancient golden torques was
“ dug up near the Castle of Harlech, in Mer-
“ ionethshire. It is a wreathed bar of gold,
“ or perhaps three or four rods jointly twisted,
“ about four feet long, flexile, but naturally
“ bending only one way in the form of a hat-
“ band. It is hooked at both ends. It is of a
“ round form, about an inch in circumference,
“ and weighs eight ounces.” Gibson's additions
to Camden, p. 658, Edit. 1695.

I consider the use of mead, which is mentioned in several of the poems as the drink of their feasts, and of horns as the drinking vessels, as circumstances of consistent manners: so are the allusions to transmigration, which abound in Taliesin, and many appropriate traits in Aneurin and Llywarch. But on this point I ask the adversaries of the poems to make out objections.

That

That the form and composition of the poems suit their period.

If they exhibited a complex, or even a regular epic fable, or any mode of arrangement that critical rules would approve; if they were dressed in an elegant costume, or betrayed any skilful polish of manners or sentiment, we might have some room for suspicion. But they have nothing of this sort; they are as inartificial, as humble in design, and as rude in execution, as scepticism could desire. They shew us the real wilderness of nature with all the discordant mixture of occasional fecundity and intervening aridity. Flowery meads, and cheerless heaths; bursts of light, and the most chilling gloom perpetually succeed each other, without any careful disposition, or judicious contrast. They display no order but that of the natural association of such ideas as they express. If they sing of battles, the heroes are praised without art, and the conflicts are described without method. Not a trace of the fine models of Greece or Rome, not a single imitation of their imagery or their poetical architecture,

chitecture, can be discerned. They are just such compositions as such bards, in such an age, would be expected to write. Many traits of glowing poetry abound. Much of the inspired bard will be seen, but no contrivance, no taste, no delicacy, no art, no polish. The Gododin of Aneurin, the longest of the poems, is a very distinguished monument of antiquity, and its internal evidence is peculiar and strong. It is not of easy construction, because its text is much injured; and because it contains much lyrical measure, intermixed with the full heroic rime, and with the singular ornaments of Welsh poetry, of which I shall hereafter speak. The expressions are oftentimes very concise, its transitions very rapid and frequent, its diction strong and figurative; and sometimes made more difficult by the peculiar compound words in which the poet indulges, and which the Welsh language with great facility admits. Though an heroic poem of 920 lines with one subject, it exhibits a strong character of genuine unpolished irregularity. It hath no elegant and artful introduction

introduction or invocation : the bard was a warrior, and had fought in the conflict he describes. He was commemorating friends and fellow soldiers, he had to state what he saw, there is therefore no reflective and refined address. He bursts at once into his subject, and begins it with describing not his plan or purpose, but one of his heroes.

From its genuineness it has also no regular, well-disposed fable ; no careful concatenation of events, no well-placed or skillfully contrasted incidents ; the poem is like a real native forest, wild, impressive and picturesque, but very devious and irregular. It is rather poetic memoranda of a disastrous conflict, penned by a friend, who had witnessed its events in all the confusion in which they occurred, than a well conceived, and artfully arranged series of individual conflicts, like the Poems of Homer, which though genuine, as to the author, yet contain incidents which the poet's invention has arranged as it pleased.

The Gododin abounds with strong and frequent bursts of feeling highly natural to its

alleged author, but which are not so likely to have been shewn in a forged poem, where the author would have to support an artificial character. One topic of this sort which pervades the poem, is that incident which occasioned the loss of the battle; I mean the inebriety of the Britons: to this the bard is perpetually alluding. As he notices the friends who fell around, he cannot drive from his memory the chief cause of their calamity: this was extremely natural.

The poem suddenly opens with the presence of a mounted warrior, whom the bard contemplates and describes:

But

GREDYV was a youth
 Vigorous in the tumult,
 A swift, thick-maned steed,
 Was under the thighs of the fair youth.
 A shield light and broad,
 Hung on the slender fleet courser.
 His sword was blue and shining;
 Golden spurs and ermine adorned him. (1.)

(1.) Gredyf gwr ced gwas
 Gwhyrr am dias

Meirch

But the poet contemplates him only to sing
his elegy ; from the next lines we find Gredyv
was one of the victims of the day.

It is not for me,

To envy thee.

I will do nobler to thee ;

In poetry I will praise thee.

Alas ! sooner will the bloody bier arrive,

Than nuptial festivity.—

Sooner will the ravens have food,

Than the dear friend of Owen

Enjoy a family.

Perishing in his abode under the ravens

Is the courser, by the valley,

Where the son of Marco was slain. (2.)

From

Meirch mwth myngyras

Y dan mordhnyt mygr was

Yfguyt ysgafn llydan

Ar bedrein mein buan

Cledyvawr glas glan

Ethy aur a phan

(2.) Ny bi ef a vi

Cas y rhof a thi

Gwell gwnaf a thi

Ar wawt dy voli

Cynt i waet elawr

No gyt i neithiawr

Cynt y uwyd i vrein

Noc yr argynrein

From this warrior, the bard turns immediately to commemorate another, who appears to have been a great favourite, as many stanzas are devoted to him :

Caeawg instantly the foremost wherever he came,
The portion of mead from the chieflady had held—
The point of his shield was pierced. When he heard
The shout, he gave no protection. He pressed on,
Nor did he retire from the battle when the blood flowed
around.

Like rushes he cut down the men. He would not
depart.

The Gododin relates not on the ground of Mordai
Before the tents of Madoc when he returned,
The return of more than one in a hundred.

Caeawg the overwhelmer, raised his spear ;
He was like the attack of an eagle on the strand when
allured.

His promise was a token ; most beloved,
He nobly executed his purpose : he retreated not
From the army of Gododin. He lay hid—
Valliant to urge the conflict, he was exalted in it.
But neither his figure nor his shield preserved him.
He was not able to survive the excessive bruises
From the blows of the embattled host.

Cu cyveillt Euein
Cwl y vot y dan vrein
March ym pa vro
Ladd un mab Marco.

Caeawg

Caeawg the leader, with the countenance of a wolf,
 With amber wreaths twined over his eye-brows.
 Fatal was the amber, the ornament of the banquet.
 Oh! that he had disdained the strife of the wallowing
 men;

When Gwyned came to the North to share
 The council of the son of Ysgyran.

Caeawg the leader, armed in the shout,
 Tho' he is not now the hero ardent for deeds of blood,
 To share in opening the front of the arrayed forces,
 He overthrew five bands before his blade.
 Of the men of Deira and Bernicia, the dreadful ones!
 Twenty hundred of these perished in an hour!

Ah! sooner shall the wolf have flesh than thou a
 wedding;

Sooner shall the raven have prey, than thou repose
 again.

Sooner shall the hurdle come with the mangled from
 the bloody earth.—

This was the dismal price of the mead in the pale
 disastrous hour.

And yet by the skilful he shall be extolled, while there
 exists a finger. (3.)

(3.) Caeawc cynhaiawc men y delhai
 Diphun ymlaen bun medd a dalhei
 Twll tal i rodawr yn y clywei
 Aur ni roddei naud meint dilynei
 Ny chyliei o gamhawn yn y verei
 Waet mal brwyn gomynai gwyr nyt elhei

The

The fate of these two heroes, occasions him to advert to the cause. He proceeds to mention that the Britons had been feasting too plentifully before the battle.

The warriors went to Gododin full of laughter,
To bitter conflict with the clashing fwords.—

Short interval of joy indeed!

The son of Botgad lamented it—Manly was his arm.
But they went in a mass. Their punishment was complete.

Both old and young—The bold and the powerful.—

The

Nys adrawdd Gododin ar lawr mordei

Rac pebyll Madawc pan atcorei

Namyn un o gant yn y delei

Caeawc Cynnyviat cyvlat erwyt

Ruthyr Eryr yn y lyr pan lithiwyt

Yanot a vu not a garwyt

Gwell a wnaeth y arvaeth ny giliwyt

Rac bedin Ododin o dechwyt

Hyder gymmell ar vreithell vanawyt

Ny nodi nac ysgeth nag ysgwyt

Ny ellir anet rhy vaethuwyt

Rac ergit cadfannau catwyt

Caeawc cynhorawc bleide maran

Gwefrawr godrwyawr torchawr am ran

Bu guefraur guerthvaur guerth gwinyan

Ef gwrthodes gwrys gwyr discrein

Yt dyffei Wyned a gogledd ei rann

O gyssul mab ysgyran

Ysgwyd wr angcyfan

Caeawc

The certain death of the conflict pierced them,
The warriors went to Gododin a laughing phalanx,
Soon the embattled host rose against them, in unlovely
contest.

They flew with blades shining, without din,
The puissant column with spears alive, moved on.
They went to Cattraeth—Loquacious were their hosts,
Pale mead had been their feast, and was their poison.
Three hundred with machines were in array.
But what a calm succeeded to their joy?
They went in a mass, their punishment was complete;
The certain death of the conflict pierced them
through. (4.)

These

Caeawc cynhorawc arvawc yggawr
Cyn od iw y gwr gwrdd eggwyawr
Cyvran yn racwan rac bydinawr
Cwydei pym pymunt rac y llafnawr
O wyr Dewyr a Bryneich dychrawr
Ugeincant eu divant yn unawr
Cynt y gig y vleidd nog yt e neithiawr
Cynt e vud y vran noc yt y elawr
Cyn noe argyurein e waet e lawr
Gwerth med ynghcynstedh gan liwed awr
Kyneid hir ermygir tra vo cerdawr

(4.) Gwyr a aeth Ododin chwerthin ognaw
Chwerwyn trin a llain yn ymduliaw
Byrr vlyned yn hed udynt yndaw
Mab Botgat gunaeth guynyeth gunith e law
Cyt elwynt y lanneu y benytyaw

A hen

These are the first seventy-three lines of the Gododin, and will serve as sufficient specimen of its style and character.

The name of Aneurin has stood very high in the estimation of his countrymen; but all human greatness is relative. The luminary of the 6th century, which shone with transcendent lustre in a rude country, where all around was dark and dreary, will appear but a cloudy orb, when it is presented to our notice in the noon-tide radiance of modern intellect. We must not approach the ancient Welsh bards as the competitors for the wreath of a Pindar or a Gray. These poets were the offspring of

A hen a ieneing a hydyr a allaw
Dadyl diheu angeu yn eu treiddiaw
Gwyr a aeth Ododin chwerthin wanar
Digynny ei enm bydin trin diachar
Wy ledi a llavnawr eb vawr drydar
Colown glyw reithvyw rodi arwar

Gwyr a aeth Gattræth oed ffraeth y lu
Glaſved eu hancwyn ae gwenwyn vu
Trychant trwy beiriant yn cattau
A gwedy elwch tawelwch vu
Cyt elwynt y lanneu y benytu
Dadyl dieu angeu y eu treudu

highly

highly cultivated ages ; while the ancient Welsh bards were but the descendants of rude ancestors, possessed indeed, for centuries, of the singular institution of Druidism or Bardism, but yet composing for a barbarous people, and confined to the narrow benefit of a local education.

Whoever reads these very ancient poems with attention, will be struck with a very great disparity between their versification and the intellect they display. The versification is formed on one of the most peculiar, difficult, and artificial systems conceiveable, and it is executed as elaborately as it was designed.

To instance only from the Gododin,—

One of the practices by which its versification was governed, was rime. This is essential to the poetry. All the poems of the ancient bards, are rimed at the end of the line ; nor is the riming in couplets, which is comparatively easy, but the same rime is carried on for several lines. Thus in these final rimes in p. 1.

dehai

dehai	erwyt	maran
dalhei	lithiwyt	am ran
clywei	garwyt	gwinvan
dilynei	giliwyt	discrein
verei	dechwyt	rann
elhei	vanawyt	yfgyran
mordei	yfgwyt	angcyfan
atcorei	vaethuwyt	
delei	catwyt	

The same rime is sometimes carried on to great length. In p. 9, there are 23 lines together riming with in : and in p. 7, there are 18 lines in enn.

But besides these final rimes, they also studied to introduce other riming syllables dividing the words of every line. Thus,

Caeawc cynhaiawc men y dehai
Diphun ymlaen bun medd a dalhei

This practice was sometimes extended to three rimes in the line as,

Gwefrawr Godrwyawr torchawr am ran—
Blwyddyn yn erbyn urdyn deawd—
Dadyl dieu aneu y eu treudu—

In

In all these examples the rimes are on final syllables.

In addition to these difficult peculiarities, was also the habit of alliteration; or of making two or more words in the line begin with the same letter. Thus in the first line,

Gredyf gwr oed gwas

In the 3d and 4th,

Meirch mwth myngvras

Y dan mordhuyt mygr was

Sometimes it was used profusely, as in this line,

Bu bwyd brein bu bud y yran

These alliterations are almost as incessant as their final rimes.

Nor were they content with confining their alliterations to the commencing letter, but they often extended them to syllables, making a sort of alliterative rimes. Thus in two lines,

Bu guefraur, guerthvawr guerth gwinvan

Ef gwrthodes gwrys gwyr discrein

Sometimes it happened, or was contrived,
that

that the same line should exhibit the commencing alliterative rimes, and the final syllables rimes.

Mab Botgat *gunaeth guynyeth gunith e law*

Ny mynws *gwrawl gwadawl chwegrwn*

In selecting these difficulties of the ancient Welsh versification, I state those only which struck me as an Englishman. I believe there are many other niceties, perceptible and precious to Welsh bards and critics.

That such slavish attention to the incessant consonancy of syllables, could never be exercised without a sacrifice of the most valuable qualities of poetic thought must be felt by all to whom the lays of Parnassus are familiar. I was therefore not surprised, to find the works of the Welsh bards, beneath my expectations as poems. But I must pay the tribute due to the genius of Aneurin, to say, that notwithstanding the oppressive trammels in which he marched; and notwithstanding the gloom, disasters, and confusion of the period in which he

lived

lived, his Gododin has many passages which for glowing expression, striking metaphor, genuine feeling, and poetic imagery, must please and interest in every age.

My opinion of the *poetry* of TALIESIN's works, is by no means consistent with his general fame. His power of versification indeed, excites my surprise; it seems to have been as easy for him to rime in all sorts of measures, as for others to write prose, and he introduces frequently, even in his shortest measures, the peculiarities of bardic consonancy. Some of his poems are in what I would call the full heroic rime, like the mead song already quoted, (p. 60.) others in short rimed metres of various lengths. But though he was certainly accomplished in all the arts of bardic versification, he is not very distinguished for genuine poetry of thought and imagery. Sometimes indeed the poet bursts out, as in the following description of the gleam of the steel points of weapons, which is very original and picturesque:

Q

I saw

I saw mighty men,
 Who thronged together at the shout;
 I saw blood on the ground,
 From the assault of swords.
They ting'd with blue the wings of the dawn,
 When they threw off the ashen spears*.

Several passages of this sort may be found, but he has not always much connection of subject, and very often much bardic mythology appears. This is in nothing more conspicuous than in his allusions to his own transmigrations. As this is a curious subject, I will detain the reader's attention for a short time upon it.

Among the Welsh remains is a MS. of poetical triads. The MS. has been intitled, *Barddas*; or, the book of Bardism: or, *Cyvri-nac Beirdd Ynys Prydain*. The triads were

* Gweleis wyr gorsawr
 A Ddygyrchynt awr
 Gweleis waed ar llawr
 Rhag rhwthr cledysawr
 Glesynt esgwyll gwawr
 Efgorynt yn waewawr.

Talies. p. 40.

collected

collected together at different periods.* Some of them state the bardic doctrines about the Me-

* That the reader may have some idea of the book from which I am going to quote, I think it right to insert some extracts from its prefaces, with which Mr. Owen has favoured me.

The book was last transcribed and revised by Edward Davydd, who died 1690. His original MS. is yet extant, in the library of Llan Haran, in Glamorganshire, now the property of Mr. Turberville. The collection was made before him, by Llywelyn Sion who flourished in 1580, and died in 1616. I will give a translation of a part of the Welsh preface of D. Davydd, and after that some extracts from the preface of the former collector, Llywelyu Sion; Mr. Owen has only added, in parentheses, the dates of the persons and things mentioned therein.

E. Davydd's Advertifement.

“ Arranged by Edward Davydd, of Margam, in Morgauwg, out of the books of bards and learned teachers, lest the materials should become lost; and more particularly the books of Meiryg Davydd, (1560. presd.) Davydd Llwyd Mathew, (1580. disc.) Davydd Benwyn, (1560. presd.) and Llywelyn Sion of Llangewyz, (1560. disc. & presd. 1580.) who were bards graduated of the chair, according to the privilege and custom of the bards of the Isle of Britain; chiefs of science, under the authority of the county and sovereign of all the lordship of Morganwg, Gwent and Euas.”

“ This arrangement was adjudged to be just, according to the primitive character of vocal song, and the usage of

Metempsychosis. These triads, of course, only prove that the bards of the middle ages had

the primitive bards of the Isle of Britain; and was sanctioned in the congress of vocal song, held at Bewpyr Castle, in Morganwg, on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Whitsuntide, in the year 1681, under the protection of Sir Richard Bassett, Knight, Lord of the place, and under the proclamation and notice of a year and a day, through Morganwg, Gwent and Euas."

"The chiefs of song there, were Charles Bwttn, Esq. Davyz ir Nant, (1680. presd.) Edward Davyz, of Margam, (1620. disc. 1660. presd.) associated with them were the following poets and bards, according to the privilege and custom of the bards of the Isle of Britain, being teachers of critical judgment:

And this, In the Name of God, and all Good."

Hywel. Lewys	Dav. Ivan Sion
John Roberts	Charles Dav. Meredydd
Thomas Lewys	Hopcin Llywelyn
Davydd Edward	Lleision Evan
Sign Padam	Jenkin Richards
Morgan Gruffydd	Bleddyn Sion
	Samuel Jones, Clerk.

Beginning of Edward Davydd's Preface.

"As I have from my youth taken a delight in the study of bardism, and to search the books of the bards and the best teachers, and more especially the books of the oldest bards of Wales; and also considering the injunctions given to the bards in the congress of Caerdyv, (1620.) which was held in the castle there, through the protection,

had these notions, but it is highly probable, that what they believed on this point, they derived

tion, licence, and command of the lord William Herbert, that they should search out, and establish anew the old order and regulation of the art of song and its relations, and as to the privileges and customs of the bards of the Isle of Britain, I fully gave up myself to the enterprise of trying whether I could contribute any kind of benefit to the design."

Extracts from the Preface of Llywelyn Sion o Langeowydd.

(1580. disc. Died, 1616.)

"The authors, teachers, and judges who sanctioned this system and code, were the druids and bards, after they had come to the faith in Christ; and they composed on the nine canons, that is, the nine primary principles of vocal song, and on the recurrent pause, the hupyr and warrior triplet, which were with them, metres of authority. Afterwards came Aneurin, Taliesin, Merddin, and others, who were primary bards of the Isle of Britain, who gave unanimous judgment with respect to song, and formed additional metres from the nine primary canons, namely, the two Toddais, Englyn, Proest, Triban Cyrc, Lloftawdyl, Clogyrnac, and Cyngog; and afterwards were devised all the other metres, until they formed twenty-four in number, each of which originated from a particular and different character, irrevalent to the principles of each other; and more than that number, of such a nature, there cannot be of metrical principles.—"

"In the congress of Caernarthen, (1450.) heterogeneous principles were introduced into the system, by the

rived from their ancestors, and we know that the Druids believed in transmigration, we may consider

pertinacity of Davydd ab Edmwnd. This induced Gwilym Tew, (1460. presd.) Ieuan ab Hywel Swrdwal, (1430. disc.) and J. Getthin, ab J. ab Lleifion, (1430. pres.) to oppose such an innovation, and they proclaimed a congress under the notice of a year and a day, to be held on the mountain of Garth Maelog, and in addition to that, they obtained the authority of the country, and lord Richard Nevill, as the lord paramount of Morganwg; and in that congress the bards of Morganwg, Gwent, and Ewas, entered their protest, and repelled the regulation of Caermarthen, as repugnant to the privileges and customs of the bards of the Isle of Britain. From that time forwards, the three provinces before mentioned, maintained by one consent, their primitive regulation of science, and afterwards was obtained the authority for an exclusive congress for these three districts, through the grant of King Henry the Seventh. In the congresses that were held by virtue of this authority, it was given in judgment, and established as a rule, that the old system, with its regulation and principles of science should be maintained; and from that time to this, there has been continued in Morganwg a complete opposition to the regulation of Caermarthen; with an injunction upon the members to search out the ancient practice and regulation of science. But there were not then nearly so many metres in use, because they were not had in common practice; afterwards, however, many were found out, as may be seen in the books of Gwilym Tew, and William Egwad, who were bards of the chair of Morganwg. Since then Lewys Morganwg, (1500. discd. & presc. 1520.) has written

consider them as the source of the opinions.

They mention three regions of existence, which it is very curious to observe, they denominate *cylchau*, or circles *.

In the *cylch y Ceugant*, or the circle of the all-inclosing circle; there was nothing either alive or dead but God, (*Duw*) and he only could pervade it. The circle of *Gwynnyd*,

written amply and more explicitly respecting the metres and the nature of their composition in his book of bardism. Subsequent to this, the bards of the three districts were summoned together in the castle of Caerdyv, under the protection and licence of the lord William Herbert, where a congress was held, (1529.) wherein judgment was given, with order and regulation of the science of song."

"Sometime afterwards, Meiryg Davydd, (1520. discd. 1560, presd. died, 1600.) compiled a book of bardism to his lord, Sir Edward Lewys, of the Van, in which there is seen a faithful view of the art of song, as to its nature and design. This book, *I Llywelyn Sion o Langewydd*, obtained; and from it I extracted nearly all that is in this book, except the verses by way of exemplifications, which I collected from here and there, out of books, and from different bards, and composed some myself, as well as I could; and in this book of my compiling is seen the system of *Morganwg* as to vocal song, and its various relations."

* We cannot avoid recollecting here, that the great Druidical temples of Stonehenge and Avebury, the smaller remains in Cornwall, that formerly in Jersey, now removed to Lord Conway's park, and others, exhibit *circles* of stones, as the essential form of their structure.

or felicity, is that which Men are to pervade after they have passed through their terrestrial changes. But the circle of ABRED, or Evil, is that in which human nature passes through those varying stages of its existence, which it must undergo, before it is qualified to inhabit the circle of felicity.

All animated beings have three states of existence to pass through. The state of Abred, or evil in Annwn, or the great deep; the state of freedom, in the human form, and the the state of love, which is happiness, in the nev, or heavens. All beings but God, must therefore undergo three angen, or necessities: They must have a beginning in Annwn, or the great deep: a progression in Abred, or in the state of evil, and a completion in the circle of felicity in heaven.

In the evil state of Abred there are three angen, or necessities. There must be *existence* in its least possible degree, which is its commencement.—There must be the *matter* of every thing, from which proceeds increase, or progression of existence which cannot be in
the

the other states, and there must be the *forms* of all things whence discriminating individuality.

The three necessary causes of the state of Abred, are to collect the matter of every nature, to collect the knowledge of every thing, and to collect power to destroy Gwrth, (the opposing,) and Cythraul *, and to divest ourselves of evil. Unless every state of being is thus passed through, there can be no perfection.

The three chief infelicities attached to the state of Abred are, that we incur necessity, oblivion and death ; and these things are the divine instruments for subduing evil, (drwg) and Cythraul. The deaths which follow our changes are so many escapes from their power.

Humanity must necessarily suffer, change, and choose, and as it has the liberty of choosing, its sufferings and changes cannot be foreseen.

* Cythraul is the British name for the devil. It means the destroying principle. It may have been derived from the ancient mythology of the nation : I have therefore preserved the name in the text.

In

In passing through the changes of being, attached to the state of Abred, it is possible for man, by misconduct, to fall retrograde into the lowest state from which he had emerged.

There are three things which will inevitably plunge him back into the changes of Abred. Pride; for this he will fall to Annwn, which is the lowest point at which existence begins. Falsehood, which will re-plunge him to Obryn*, and Cruelty, which will consign him to Cydvil†: from these he must proceed again in due course, through changes of being, up to humanity.

From this exposition, we see that the Bardic transmigration was from Annwn, through the changes of Abred to the felicity of heaven. These changes never ended till man had fitted himself for heaven. If his conduct in any one state, instead of improving his being, had made it worse, he fell back into a worse con-

* Obryn literally means "something nearly equivalent." It therefore implies a degraded transmigration adequate to the fault committed.

† This literally means "a corresponding animal," or a transmigration into some ferocious animal.

dition,

dition, to commence again his purifying revolutions.

Humanity was the limit of the degraded transmigrations. All the changes above humanity were felicitating.

To acquire Knowledge, benevolence, and power, is the object of the human state; and these, as they require liberty and choice, cannot be attained in any state previous to humanity. Knowledge, benevolence, and power, are the arms by which Drwg and Cythraul are to be subdued. Humanity is the scene of the contest.

I will now only add, that to have traversed every state of animated existence, to remember every state and its incidents, and to be able to traverse every state that can be desired for the sake of experience and judgment, is that consummation which can only be attained in the circle of felicity. In this circle man will be still undergoing rotations of existence, but happy ones, because God only can endure the eternities of the circle of infinity without changing. Man's happy changes in the circle

cle of felicity, will exhibit perpetual acquisition of knowledge, beautiful variety, and occasional repose *.

He may visit again the scenes of humanity for his pleasure, but cannot incur any moral depravity.

Such is the bardic doctrine of transmigration, as it appears in the book of bardism. How far it transmits the tenets of the druids on this subject, or what modifications Christianity introduced, cannot now be ascertained.

By recollecting this doctrine of transmigrations, we may understand many passages of Taliesin. His Hanes Taliesin is a recital of his pretended transmigrations; and when we read in his other poems, that he has been in

* The book of Bardism containing these tenets, has not yet been printed. I believe it will appear in the 4th volume of the Welsh Archæology. But copious extracts from it may be found at the end of the 2d volume of Mr. Edward Williams's poems, with translations. I cannot speak of this gentleman without mentioning his talents with high respect; nor without recommending him earnestly to the attention of his wealthy countrymen. His age enforces the claims of his genius.

various

various animal shapes, as a serpent *, a wild fow, a buck, or a crane, and such like, we must call to mind, that those scenes of existence in Abred, which were between Annwn and humanity, were the changes of being in the bodies of different animals. One great privilege of the being who was far advanced in his progression to the circle of felicity, was to remember all the states through which he had passed. Taliesin seems to have been eager to establish his claims to such a successful probation. He is perpetually telling us what he has been. Oblivion was one of the curses of Abred; the recovery of memory was a proof that Drwg and Cythraul began to be overcome. Taliesin therefore as profusely boasts of his recovered reminiscence, as any modern sectary can do of his state of grace and election.

There is so much of Taliesin's poetry which

* Wyf sarph, p. 27.—bum bwch.—bum banhwch.—
bum garan, p. 44.

no one can understand, that I cannot but place him, in point of intrinsic merit, below the other bards, although in the estimation of his countrymen, he seems to have been ranked in a superior class.

His Cad Goddeu, the Battle of the Trees, is eminently incomprehensible, and so are others. That I may not be thought to condemn him unjustly, I will beg leave to present the reader with his poem, called Preiddeu Annwn, the spoils of Annwn. If its allusions are at all historical, they are too much involved in mythology to be comprehended. In his mead song, there is a connected train of thought. In the following poem, all connection of thought, seems to have been studiously avoided *.

* It is, however, fair to remark, that if the Mabino-gion and all the Welsh remains were to be accurately studied; it is probable, that enough might be gathered from them to elucidate some of the allusions of Taliesin to the opinions, tales, and traditions of his day. This would make intelligible many passages now obscure.

PRIEDDEU

PREIDDEU ANNWN.

Praise to the Lord, supreme ruler of the high region, (1.)
Who hath extended his dominion to the shores of the
world.

Complete was the prison of Gwair in Caer Sidi,
Thro' the anger of Pwyll and Pryderi,
No one before him went to it.

A heavy blue chain held the faithful youth,
And before the spoils of Annwn gloomily he sings:
And till doom shall continue in his lay.

Thrice the fullness of Pridwen, we went into it.
Except seven, none returned from Caer Sidi.

Am I not a candidate for fame to be heard in the song;
In Caer Pedryfan, four times revolving.

In the first word from the cauldron when it was expressed
From the breath of nine damsels it began to be warmed.

Is

(1.) Golych wledig pendefig gwad ri
Pe ledas y pennaeth tros draeth Mundi
Bu cywair carchar Gwair ynghaer Sidi
Trwy dybostol Pwyll a Phryderi
Neb cyn nog ef nid aeth iddi
Yr gadwyn dromlas cywirwas ai cedwi
A rhac Preiddieu Annwn tost yt geni
Ac yd frawd parahawd yn barddwedi
Tri lloneid prydwen ydd aetham ni iddi
Nam faith ny dyrraith o Gaer Sidi
Neud wyf glod geymyn cerdd o chlywir
Ynghaer Pedryfan pedyr y chwelyd
Ynghynueir or pair pan leferid
O anadl naw morwyn gochynneffid

Neu

Is it not the cauldron of the chief of Annwn, in its
fashion

A ridge round its edge of pearls !

It will not boil the food of a coward not sworn

A sword bright flashing to him was brought

And in the hand of Llaminawg was left,

And before the passage of the gate of Uffern (or hell)

The horns of light were burning.

And when we went with Arthur, in his labours like
lightning,

Except seven, none returned from Caer Veditid.

Am I not a candidate for fame in the song to be list-
ened to ;

In Caer Pedryvan, in the isle of Pybyrddor,

The twilight and the jet of night moved together,

Bright

Neu pair pen annwfn pwy *uynud*

Gwrym am ei oror a Mererid

Ni beirw bwyd llwrf ni rydyngid

Kled dyf lluch lleawc iddaw rhyddychid

Ac yn llaw Lleminawg ydd edewid

A rhag drws porth Uffern llugyrn llofcið

A phan aetham ni gan Arthur trafferth ilethrid

Namyn faith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Veditid

Neud wyf glod geimyn cerdd glywanawr

Ynghaer Pedryfan Ynys Pybyrddor

Echwydd a Muchydd cymysgettor

Gwin

Bright wine their beverage before their hosts ;
 Three times the fulness of Prydwen we went on the sea,
 Except seven, none returned from Caer Rhegor.

I will not have merit from the multitude with the en-
 sign of the governor ;
 Beyond Caer Wydr they beheld not the prowess of
 Arthur ;

Three times twenty hundred men stand on the wall,
 He will be unprotected who converses with its centinel-
 Three times the fullness of Prydwen we went with
 Arthur,

Except seven, none returned from Caer Coludd.

I will not have merit from the multitudes with trailing
 shield,

They knew not on what day, or who caused it,
 Nor what hour in the splendid day Cwy was born ;
 Nor who made that he went not to the meanders of
 Defwy ;

They

Gwin gloyw eu gwirawd rhag ei gosgordd
 Tri lloneid Prydwen ydd aetham ni ar for
 Namyn faith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Rigor
 Ni obrynaf lawyr llen llywiadur
 Tra chaer wydr ni welsynt wrhyd Arthur
 Tri ugeint canhwr a fesi ar y mur
 Oedd anawdd ymadrawdd ai gwiliadur
 Tri lloneid Prydwen ydd aeth gan Arthur
 Namyn faith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Goludd
 Ni obrynaf i lawyr laes eu cylchwy
 Ny wyddant hwy py ddydd peridydd pwy
 Py awr ym meinddydd y ganed Cwy
 Pwy gwnaeth ar nid aeth dolau Defwy

R

Ny

They knew not the brindled ox, with his thick head-
band,

Seven score knobs in his collar.

And when we went with Arthur of mournful memory,
Except seven, none returned from Caer Vandwy.

I will not have merit from the multitudes of drooping
courage;

They knew not what day the chief was caused,
Nor what hour in the splendid day the owner was born;
What animal they keep of silver head.

When we went with Arthur of mournful contention;
Except seven, none returned from Caer Ochren.

Monks pack together like dogs in the choir,
From their meetings with their witches;
One has the course of the wind, one the water of the sea,
One the burning of the fire, of unbounded tumult.

Monks

Ny wddant hwy yr ych brych bras ei benrhwy
Seith ugein cygwn yn ei aerwy
A phan aetham ni gan Arthur afrddwl gofwy
Namyn faith ni ddyrraith o Gaer Vandwy
Ni obrynaf lwyr llaes ei gevyn
Ni wddant py ddydd peridydd pen
Py awr ym meinddydd y ganed perchen
Py fil a gatwant ariant y pen
Pan aetham ni gan Arthur afrddwl gynhen
Namyn faith ni ddyrraith a Gaer Ochren
Mynaich dychnud tal cunin cor
O gyfranc uddydd ai Gwiddanhor
Ai un hynt gwynt ai un dwfr mor
Ai un ufel tan twrwr diachor

Myneich

Monks pack together like wolves,
 From their meetings with their witches,
 They know not when the twilight and the dawn
 divide,
 Nor what the course of the wind, nor who agitates it,
 In what place it dies, on what region it roars,
 The grave of the saint vanishing from the foot of the altar.
 I will pray to the Lord, the great Supreme,
 That I be not wretched—may Christ be my portion*!

Could Lycophron or the Sibylls, or any ancient oracle be more elaborately incomprehensible?

In his historical poems, Taliesin is more level to our perceptions:

When he sounds his harp in praise of Urien

Myneich dychnud fal bleiddawr
 O gyfranc uddydd ai gwyddyanhawr
 Ni wddant pan ysgar deweint a gwawr
 Neu wynt pwy hynt pwy ei rynnawdd
 Py va ddifa py dir a plawdd
 Bed Sant yn ddifant o bet allawr
 Golychaf i wledig pendefig mawr
 Na bwyf trist Crist am gwaddawl

p. 45.

* See a note on this poem in the Appendix.

we can understand and applaud the lay. I will
give a specimen of this in his

DADOLWCH URIEN.

The Reconciliation with Urien.

Be the lion the most implacable ! (1.)
I will not revile him.
But Urien I will approach,
And to him I will sing.
When he who is my assurance comes,
I shall obtain superintendence,
Of the most excellent part,
Under the flow of melody.
The endless lineage which I see
Concerns me not much ;
I shall not go to them nor be with them,
I will not address myself to the North,

Upon

(1.) Llew uydd echaffaf
Mi nyw dirmygaf
Urien yd gyrchaf
Iddaw yd ganaf
Pan ddel fyngwaeslaff
Cynwys a gaffaf
Or parth goreuhaf
Y dan eilaffaf
Nid mawr nim dawr
Byth gweheleith a welaf
Nid af attadynt ganthynt ni byddaf
Ni chyfarchaf fi gogledd

Ar

But to my
 First, if there should be multitudes about
 That I might see mutual pledging ;
 Their affection is not necessary to me,
 For Urien will not refuse me
 The lands of Llwyfenydd.
 Mine will be their riches,
 Mine will be their wilds,
 Mine will be their produce,
 Mine will be their beauties ;
 And their luxuries,
 Mead out of bugles,
 And good inexhaustible,
 From a splendid prince.

To

Ar mei teyrnedd
 Cyn pei am laweredd
 Y gwelwn gynghwyfledde
 Nid rhaid ym hoffedd
 Urien nim gommedd
 Llwyfenydd diredd
 Ys meu eu rheufedd
 Ys meu y gwyledd
 Ys meu y llaredd
 Ys meu y deliedeu
 Ai goreffrassen
 Medd o fualeu
 A da dieifieu
 Gan deyrn golau

The most generous that has been heard of
 The kings of every language,
 To thee are all captive.
 For thee there will be mourning when thy death shall
 be certain,
 Whilst it would menace me.
 After possession I will declare,
 That there was none I could better love;
 As far as I could know.
 At times I behold
 The extent of what I shall obtain.
 Excepting to God most high,
 I will not renounce
 Thy royal sons
 The most generous of men.

Their

Haelaf rygigleu
 Teyrnedd pob Iaith
 It oll ydynt gaith
 Rhagot yt gwynir ys dir dy olaith
 Cydef mynnaffwn
 Gwedy helu henwn
 Nid oedd wel a gerwn
 Hyd ys gwybyddwn
 Weithian y gwelaf
 Y meint a gaffaf
 Namyn y Duw uchaf
 Nis dioferaf
 Dy deyrn Veibon
 Haelaf dynedon

Wy

Their shafts resound
 In the lands of their foes ;
 And until I shall wither old,
 In my severe death of fate ;
 I shall not be happy,
 Unless I am praising Urien *.

As Talieffin's poem on the battle of Argoed Llwyfain has been much alluded to by the bards of the middle ages. I will also cite it. Flamddwyn is a word implying *flame-bearing*, and is supposed to have been the name by which the Britons distinguish Ida. It is certain that Ida fought in this quarter.

Wy canau eu hyfgyron
 Yn nhiredd eu galon
 Ac yn y vallwyf hen
 Ym dygyn angeu angen
 Ni byddaf im dirwen
 Na molwyf Urien.

p. 59.

* I have been much indebted to Mr. Owen for his assistance in my Welsh translations. In every difficulty of construction I have taken his opinion as my guide.

BATTLE OF ARGOED LLWYFAIN.

In the morning of the day of Sadwrn was a great battle
 From when the sun emerged till it flamed on high ;
 Flamddwyn hastened quickly with four bodies
 To encompass Goddeu and Reged :
 He spread from Argoed to Arfynydd.
 They retained not life till the day expired.
 Flamddwyn demanded with great impetuosity,
 “ Will they give hostages, are these ready.”
 He was answered by Owen, uprising the blow,
 “ They will not give them, they are not, shall not be
 ready,
 And Cheneu, son of Coel, would be like an irritated
 lion
 But he would withhold hostages from any one.”

Urien,

(1.) Y bore Dduw Sadwrn Cad fawr a fu
 Or pan ddwyre Haul hyd pan gynnu
 Dygryfowys fflamddwyn yn bedwarllu
 Goddeu a Reged i ymddullu
 Dyfwy o Argoed hyd Arfynydd
 Ni cheffynt eiryoed hyd yr undydd
 Atorelwis fflamddwyn fawr drybestawd
 A ddodynt yngwyfllon a ynt parawd
 Yr atebwys Owain ddwyrain ffoffawd
 Nid dodynt nid ydynt nid ynt parawd
 A cheneu mab Coel byddai Cymwyawg lew
 Cyn attalai owyftl nebawd

Atorelwis

Urien, the lord of peaceful cultivation, exclaimed,

“ Being assembled for our kindred,

“ Let us elevate our banners above the mountains,

“ And push forward our forces over the borders,

“ And lift our spears over the warriors heads,

“ And rush upon Flamddwyn in his army,

“ And slaughter with him and his followers.”

From the battle of Argoed Llwyfain was many a corpse

The ravens were red from the war of men,

And the multitude hastened with the tidings.

I will celebrate the year,

I am not increasing,

But in age am declining,

Yet in the severe death of necessity,

I shall

Atorelwis Urien Udd yr echwydd

O bydd ynghyfarfod am garennnydd

Dyrchafwn eidoed odduch mynydd

Ac ymporthwn wyneb odduch emyl

A drychafwn beleidr odduch ben Gwyr

A chyrchwn fflamddwyn yn ei luydd

A lladdwn ag ef ai gyweithydd

A rhag Gwaith Argoed Llwyfain

Bu llawer Celain

Rhuddei frain rhag rhyfel Gwyr

A gwerin a gryffwys gan einnewydd

Arinaf y blwyddyn nad wyf Kynnydd

Ac yn y fallwyf hen

Ym dygn angyu angen

Ni

I shall not be in smiles,
Unless I am praising Urien.

Of Taliesin's poetry we may say, in general, that his historical poems are valuable; his others are obscure, but as they contain much old mythology and bardic imagery, they are worth attention, because some parts may be illustrated and made intelligible.

We may now consider the chief objections urged against these poems.

FIRST OBJECTION.

They have used rime; but rime, say the objectors, was not known to Europe in the sixth century. "The only opinions which now divide the learned on this subject" are, "Whether the use of rime originated from the Saracens, who took possession of Sicily in the year 828, or arose among the Italian monks in the eighth century." But "it is certain, that it was totally unknown to the ancient language of Europe *."

Ni byddif ym dyrwen
No molwyf Urien.

p: 53.

* Critical Review, Jan. 1800.

This

This has been the great objection, the most confidently relied upon, and the most vehemently pressed against the genuineness of these poems. I own when I first heard of it, it sounded very formidably to me. If this account of the use of rime was true, the Welsh bards must have been given up. I therefore took some trouble to inquire into its correctness.

I found that this peremptory opinion, about the use of rime, was a complete delusion. I stated the fruit of my researches in two essays which were last year read before the Antiquarian Society. I am informed, that they will be printed in its Transactions; and, therefore, I will only state here shortly their contents.

By decisive and authentic examples from authors whom I quoted, I traced the use of rime, from age to age, into the fourth century. I shewed, that it was used in Latin poetry in the very century in which these bards lived, and in the centuries preceding. I pursued the subject into the classical times. I intimated the reasons and the authorities which supported the opinion

nion

nion of Muratori, that rime was an appendage of the vulgar unmetrical poetry of the Romans. And I shewed its great antiquity in the languages of China, Hindostan, and Judea, as well as Arabia,

My examples of rime between the ninth century and the fourth, were taken from these authors,

Ninth Century, Otfrid.

Eighth Century, The Song on the Lombards.
Boniface.

Leobgytha.

Cœna.

Seventh Century, Aldhelm,

The Frankish Song.

Eugenius.

Drepanius Florus.

Columbanus.

And in the Sixth Venantius Fortunatus.
Century.

Of this author I cited two riming poems, and pointed out several riming passages in his other works.

In

In my second essay I shewed the use of rime in the fourth century, in the poem of St. Austin against the Donatists. In his short preface to this poem, St. Austin says :

“ Volens etiam causam Donatistarum ad ip-
 “ fuis humilimis vulgi et omnino imperitorum
 “ atque idiotarum notitiam pervenire et eorum
 “ quantum fieri posset per nos inherere me-
 “ moriæ, psalmum qui eis cantaretur per La-
 “ tinas literas feci sed usque ad v literam, tales
 “ enim abdecenarios appellant, tres vero ul-
 “ timas omisi, &c.”

The Psalm begins thus,

“ Abundantia peccatorum solet fratres con-
 “ turbare,
 “ Propter hoc Dominus noster voluit nos præ-
 “ monere,
 “ Comparans regnum cælorum, reticulo misso
 “ in mare
 “ Congreganti multos pisces, omne genus hinc
 “ et inde,
 “ Quos cum traxissent, ad littus tunc cæperunt
 “ separare,
 “ Bonos

“ Bonos in vasa miserunt, reliquos malos in
 “ mare

“ Quisquis recolit Evangelium, recongnoscat
 “ cum timore

“ Videt reticulum ecclesiam, videt hoc seculum
 “ mare

“ Genus autem mixtum Piscis, justus est cum
 “ peccatore,

“ Seculi finis est littus, tunc est tempus sepa-
 “ rare,

“ Quando retia ruperunt, multum dilexerunt
 “ mare,

“ Vasa sunt sedes sanctorum, quo non possent
 “ pervenire*.”

Twenty similar Stanzas of Twelve lines each follow the preceding, all ending in *e*, and each stanza beginning with a successive letter of the alphabet as far as *v*.

Thus the objection that the Welsh bards are forgeries, because their poems are rimed, is completely overturned. Rime was in being in Europe long before they rimed.

* Austin's Works, vol. 7; p. 3, Lyons, 1586.

After these facts, can we avoid smiling when we read such a passage as this ?

“ We would assume opposite grounds, and
“ pronounce at once, that the use of rhyme
“ *presents mathematical demonstration* that those
“ poems are glaring forgeries*.”

How an *historical* fact, even if it had been as the Critic thought, could make a *mathematical* † demonstration, he has yet to explain ! But whatever sort of demonstration he meant, the facts, as to the use of rime, instead of proving the poems to be forgeries, are auspicious to their genuineness.

SECOND OBJECTION.

The next objection, which has been so triumphantly used is this :

* This Gentleman seems to have been fond of this emphatic epithet ; for after assuming and then asserting that the poems in question, were unknown to Nennius, Geoffrey and Caradoc, he says, “ we may conclude with a *mathematical* certainty, that they are modern fabrications.” Surely *historical* certainty and *mathematical* certainty are not quite identical.

† Critical Review, January, 1800, p. 22.

But

But Giraldus, “ does not even mention the
 “ use of rhyme among his countrymen ; or
 “ if at all existed, he considered it as rude
 “ and rustic when compared with allitera-
 “ tion. Any reader will perceive that this
 “ implied neglect in the one case, or posi-
 “ tive censure in the other, could never
 “ have been expressed by a writer so ardent
 “ for the glory of his country, to the actual
 “ condemnation of all its illustrious bards.
 “ It follows, therefore, that all those pieces
 “ ascribed to the early Welsh poets, *are*
 “ *posterior to the days of Giraldus* *.”

In support of these objections, a passage of
 Giraldus is quoted, the import of which is,
 that the Welsh poets were chiefly fond of such
 ornaments as alliteration. Giraldus, adds “ a
 “ Welsh poet, therefore, would thus have ex-
 “ pressed himself :”

Digawn duw da y unic

Wrth bob crybwyh parawd *

* Critical Review, January, 1800, p. 23.

This objection is not a fact, but an inference, and the reasoning stands precisely thus :

Giraldus either does not mention rime, or considered it as rude and rustic ;

But Giraldus was ardent for the glory of his country :

Therefore he would not have condemned rime if the ancient bards had used it, and therefore all the rimed pieces ascribed to the early Welsh poets are *posterior* to the days of Giraldus.

The logician will not admire the closeness of this reasoning as applied to a question of fact. To determine the genuineness of these poems by Giraldus's estimation of rime, is as correct a method of reaching the truth, as it would be to decide against the genuineness of Dryden's rimed tragedies, because modern critics prefer blank verse. It is also a modern discovery in criticism, that if an author thinks the ancient poems of his country rude and rustic, he therefore affirms them to be forgeries. The critic argues, that because Giraldus thought the use

S

of

of rime rude and rustic, therefore these ancient poems which are rimed are forgeries.

If a reasoner ask why is this inference made? the objector's answer is, that a writer so ardent for the glory of his country, would not by such terms as rude and rustic, have condemned its illustrious bards. Therefore these poems could not have existed in the time of Giraldus. This sort of reasoning is in fact an assertion, that the poetry which a patriotic writer calls rude and rustic, cannot be the works of the ancient bards of his country.

But, I believe, Horace, though a patriot, never hesitated to describe the poems of Ennius or Lucilius as rude and rustic, and yet he thought them genuine. Our Lydgate and Chaucer are rather rude and rustic, and yet no writer, however ardent for the glory of old England, would suspect, that in so considering them, he was impeaching their genuineness.

Nothing can more strongly shew the inapplicability of the objection than the fact, that we have the authority of Giraldus himself, to prove that the works of the old bards of his country,

country, which he actually deemed genuine ; he, yet, did think rude and rustic in the strongest sense. The very words in which he speaks of Merdhin's poetry are, "Britannicam barbariem," "British barbarism." I have already quoted the passage in p. 146, he does more : he uses the very phrase of the objector ; he calls the style, "the *rude* and plain simplicity of the ancient style," and again, "the darkness of the barbaric tongue *."

But the critic means to insinuate, that Giraldus either did not know that rime was used in Welsh poetry, or thought such rimed poetry rude and rustic. It happens, unfortunately for such an insinuation, that *every* Welsh bard of *every* age used rime. Rime is essential to Welsh poetry. The poems of many bards, in the days of Giraldus, yet exist, and are they all rimed. Could Giraldus then mean to decry rime, to depreciate such poetry as used it, to hint that it was not genuine ? The moment any gentleman looks over the first volume of

* Sermonis antiqui *rudis* et plana simplicitas—barbaræ linguæ tenebras.—See before, p. 147, 148.

the Welsh Archaology and finds 584 pages of poems in double columns all rimed and all written before the fourteenth century, he might answer the question himself on the mere probability of the case.

But Giraldus can also answer this question for himself. So far is it from being true, that Giraldus was ignorant that his countrymen used rime, that Giraldus expressly mentions that they *do* use rime; and what is more—what is scarcely credible—he mentions this fact in the very passage which the angry critic adduces to prove the contrary. I am averse to use harsh words and will therefore make no observations on this circumstance. It may have arisen from some casual mistake. The beginning of the passage of Giraldus, as the critic translates and quotes it, is “They are so subtle and ingenious in their songs, verses, and set speeches, that they produce, in their native tongue, ornaments of wonderful and exquisite invention in the words and in their sentences*.”

Now

* In cantilenis, rythmicis, et dictamine tam subtiles inveniuntur ut mire et exquisitæ inventionis lingua propria

Now the words translated, “ songs, verses,
“ and set speeches,” are in the original “ *can-*

pria tam verborum quam sententiarum proferant exornationes. Unde et poetas (quos Bardos vocant) ad hoc deputatos in hac natione multos invenies, juxta illud poeticum :

Plurima concreti fuderunt carmina Bardī.

Præ cunctis autem Rhetoricis exornationibus annominatione magis utuntur, eaque præcipue specie, quæ primas dictionum literas vel syllabas convenientia jungit. Adeo igitur hoc verborum ornatu, duæ nationes Angli scil. et Cambri in omni sermone exquisito utuntur, ut nihil ab his eleganter dictum, nullum nisi rude et agreste censeatur eloquium si non schematis hujus lima plene fuerit expolitum, sicut Britannice in hunc modum

Digawn duw da y unic,
Wrth bob crybwyh parawd.

Anglice vero,

God is together gammen and wisdome. In Latino quoque haud dissimiliter eloquio eandem exornationem frequens est invenire in hunc modum. Virgilius,

Tales casum Cassandra canebat,
Et illud ejusdem ad Augustum.

Dum dubitet natura marem, faceret se puellam
Natus es o pulcher pene puella puer.

In nullis tamen linguis quas novimus, hæc exornatio adeo ut in prioribus duabus est usitata.

Girald. Cambria Descript. p. 889, 890. ap. Camd.

Anglica Hibernica, &c. Fran. f. 1601.

“*tilenis rythmicis*, et dictamine,” not *songs*, *verses*, but *rimed songs*. So that Giraldus, instead of discrediting rimed poems, as the critic asserts, begins the passage by saying, that it is of the rimed songs that he speaks, and that it is these rimed songs which possess the ornaments that he proceeds to applaud*.

One of the examples, which I cited in the essay on Rime, read in the Antiquarian Society, and which I have not seen elsewhere quoted, will, I think, illustrate the meaning of the word *rythmicis* in Giraldus, and the true application of his passage.

Aldhelm, the celebrated bishop of the West Saxons, who died 709, in his Treatise on Virginity, has this passage, “ut non inconveni-

There can be no doubt, that *cantilenis rythmicis* in the twelfth century, meant rimed songs. There can be as little doubt, that to omit the word *rythmicis* intirely in the translation and to substitute for it the word *verses*, and to produce the passage thus wrongly translated as an authority, that Giraldus does not even mention the use of rime among his countrymen, was improper. I may remark that *cantilenis rythmicis*, in the MS. in the Cotton Library, has not in the printed copy a comma between them.

“enter

“enter carmine *rythmico* dici queat *.” Here we find the same adjective, *rythmicus*, used, as by Giraldus. The example which Aldhelm immediately annexes proves that it exactly corresponds with our word *rimed*. The example is,

Christus passus patibulo

Atque læti latibulo

Virginem virgo virgini

Commendabat tutamini.

This is precisely a *cantilena rythmica* composed to the full taste of Giraldus. It has the *annominatio* which he loved, just as it frequently occurs in the Welsh poetry.

There is another proof that Giraldus knew well the use of rime among his countrymen. The two Welsh lines cited by Giraldus

Digawn Duw da y unie

and

Wrth bob crybwylh parawd.

are two distinct unconnected lines, part of two old *riming* stanzas which occur in a poem

* Aldhelm de Virgin. p. 297. Warton's Edition.

which is ascribed to the tenth century. The complete stanza, containing the first line, is,

A glyweistfi a gant Duinnic
Milur doeth detholedic
Digaun Duw da y unic *.

The other lines Giraldus, or his transcriber, has not quoted so correctly. The complete stanza is,

A glyweistfi a gant Anaraut
Milur donyauc ditlaut
Reit wrth amhwyll pwyll paraut †.

As the last line stands in the printed Giraldus, it is obviously miscopied. Giraldus adduced it as a specimen of the annominatio, but as it is printed in his work,

Wrth bob crybwyll paraud ‡

Where is the annominatio? In the real line which I have quoted, we see it in the two simi-

* See the whole poem in the *Welsh Archaeology*, p. 172.

† Ibid.

‡ In the MS. of this tract of Giraldus, in the Cotton Library, Domitian A. I. p. 122. This line is thus quoted: — rbyn dibuilh puilh paraut. This is somewhat nearer the true line than the printed one.

lar letters of *pwyl* and *paraut*, and in the fimi-
lar sounds of *amhwyll* and *pwyl*.

Let us not then be told that Giraldus is evidence, that rime was not used by the Welsh bards *.

What is it then, which Giraldus really says, in the passage so ostentatiously, but so mistakingly quoted. It is this: that the Welsh bards in their rimed songs had those ornaments which he calls, of wonderful and exquisite invention in the words and in their sentences; and of which he particularizes the annominatio;

* It is curious to observe, how much stress has been laid on the fancied ignorance of Giraldus of rime in Welsh verse. Mr. Malcolm Laing, in his Dissertation on Ossian's Poems, annexed to his History of Scotland, very decisively says, vol. II. p. 436, speaking of rime, "In
" Welsh poetry it was unknown to Giraldus Cambrensis in
" the twelfth century, a sufficient proof that the rhymes of
" Taliesin and the Welsh bards are a more recent forgery." I am much surprised, that any gentleman of character, should speak so positively upon Welsh poetry without knowing any thing about it. Independent of the above proofs from Giraldus himself that he knew of rime; how could it be unknown to him, when Meilyr, Gwalchmai, Cynddelw, Owain Cyveiliawg, Llywarch P. Moch, David Benfras, and Elidyr Sais; all men of great genius and reputation, were using it in all their poems in Giraldus's life time.

he

he does not say, that they had these ornaments without rime, but that in their rimed songs they cultivated these ornaments. Now this statement is precisely the real truth. The Welsh poems of all ages are rimed, but have also those alliterative ornaments of which Giraldus was so fond.

It was not poems with rime, which Giraldus called rude and rustic, but it was the poetry which was without alliteration. The alliteration was the beauty which no poems omitted, but such as were rude and rustic.

Therefore, besides the misconstruction of the *cantilenis rythmicis*, the critic has clearly mistaken the sense of the passage. Giraldus was speaking of alliteration—he quotes Welsh passages which have it, an old English line that has it, and he proceeds to quote two passages of Virgil which have also alliteration. Now, if it had been true, that the old bards had not used alliteration, then the epithets “rude” and rustic” would have applied to them.

But the fact is, that the old bards abound with alliteration, though not so frequently as
the

the poets of the following ages, in whose works it is almost incessant. I will now adduce instances in Taliesin and others, of that annomination which Giraldus so much esteemed.

Creadur cadarn cyn dilyw—

Ar meirch mawr modur mirein eu gwedd—

Meddwer Maelgwn Mon ag an meddwa—

Med hedleid moleid molud i bob tra.

These occur with several others in one page.

So Llywarch Hen. In his first elegy are,

A gwedy gawr garw bwylliad—

A gervod gwedy gorborth—

Gwyr ni gilynt rhag ovrn gwaew—

A gwyr rudd rhag ruthr Geraint.—

With several more.

Merddin also uses it, though more sparingly,

Yn gyfoed gyfuch gyhyd gymmaint

Trwy fron trugaredd y tyfeddaint.

Thus we find the ancient bards actually exhibit not only rime, but also these ornaments which Giraldus so much applauded. Of course the passage of Giraldus, which has been so much relied upon, is, in no respect, hostile to their genuineness.

I pass

I pass by the objection that Nennius, Jeffrey, and Caradoc, do not mention these bards, because I have already shewn, that Nennius and Jeffrey, and many Welsh writers of the age of Caradoc expressly mention them.

I know but of one more objection, which requires to be answered, and I approach it with respect, because it has been also urged by men of candour and judgment *.

It is in substance this : We find these poems placed in the sixth century, and we find none occurring before the twelfth century. This leaves an interval so suspicious, as to operate very strongly against the genuineness of any poetry earlier than the twelfth century. This objection is a fair one, and calls for a satisfactory answer. I hope to give such a one by proving these things :

1. That there are some few poems of the centuries between the sixth and twelfth yet in being.

* See Monthly Review of the Welsh Archaeology.

2. That

2. That many bards are recorded to have existed during this interval.

3. That the ravages of time are capricious, and that similar chasms occur in the literary history of other countries.

1. Of the seventh century we have the small poems preserved to us of Meigant (1), Elaeth (2), and Tyfilio (3). Of the eighth century, there is one poem of Golyddan (4), and two of Cuhelyn (5). There is also a little piece of Llevoed of the tenth century (6), and there are some anonymous pieces which seem to belong to the tenth and eleventh *.

2. The

(1) An elegy on Cynddylan and an ode. Welsh Arch. p. 159, 160.

(2) Moral Triplets, p. 161.

(3) A Religious Dialogue, p. 162.

(4) The Destiny of Britain, p. 156.

(5) Two Religious Odes, p. 164. 180.

(6) The Journey of Life, a Moral Piece, p. 154.

* As the Dialogue between Arthur Cai and Glewwlyd Welsh Arc. p. 167.

The Englynion y Clyweit, or a collection of the sayings of the earlier bards, p. 172.

The Dialogue between Arthur and Gwenhwyfar, p. 175.

The

2. The laws of Howel Dha shew a regular and much respected establishment of bards in the tenth century, as I have already mentioned *. This is a proof, which cannot be controverted, that bards did flourish during the interval which has been thought so unfavourable.

But other documents furnish us with the names of several of these bards. A triad mentions Avan Verddig, the bard of Cadwallon, the son of Cadvan † and Dygynnelw, the bard of Owain, the son of Urien. Of the other bards who lived in the sixth century, the aphorisms of six have been preserved: Idloes, Ysgafnell, Ciwg, Ystyfan, Heinin, and Cennydd.

Haft thou heard what Idloes sang.

A man mild and amiable in his life:

“The best quality is to preserve manners (1).”

The Dialogue between Arthur and Eliwlod, p. 176.

The Dialogue between Trystan and Gwalchmai, p. 178.

And some fragments.

* See before, p. 95, 96.

† Archaiol. vol. II. p. 64.

(1) A glyweisti a gant Idloes

Gwr gwar, hygar ei einoes:

“Goreu cynnedd cadw moes.”

Cited by Mr. Owen in his Cambrian Biography, p. 194, and his Dictionary, voce Moes.

Haft

Hast thou heard what Yfgavnell sang,

The son of Dyfgyvundod, the impulse of battle :

“ The poor will not be presented with gifts from afar (2). ”

Hast thou heard what Ciwg sang,

The completely wise bard of Gwynhylwg :

“ Who possesses discretion has a long fight (3). ”

Hast thou heard the saying of Ystyfan (or Stephen),

The bard of Teilo of quick reply :

“ Man covets, but God distributes (4). ”

Hast thou heard the saying of Heinin,

The bard of the Bangor of Llanveithin :

“ The braye will not be cruel (5). ”

- (2) A glyweisti a gant Yfgafnell,
Vab Dyfgyvundaut Ratgymell :
“ Nyf anregyt tlaut o bell.”

Englyn. y Clyweit, W. A. 173.

- (3) A glyweisti a gant Ciwg,
Bardd cyweirddoeth Gwynhylwg :
“ Perchen pwyll pell ei olwg.”

Ibid. another MS. copy not yet printed.

- (4) A glyweisti gwedyl Ystyfan,
Bardd Teilaw ateb bwan :
“ Dyn a gwennydc ; Duw a ran.”

Ibid.

- (5) A glyweisti gwedyl Heinin,
Vardd o vangor Llanveithin :
“ Gwrawl ni vydd ddyfgethrin.”

Ibid.

The saying of Cennydd, the son of Aneurin, has been already given (6).

In the ninth century were Cynllwg and Geraint the Blue Bard who have left these aphorisms :

Hast thou heard the saying of Cynllwg,

A hoary bard of extensive fight :

“ He enjoys good, who has not evil (7).”

Hast thou heard the saying of the Blue Bard,

Giving social counsel :

“ Better the favour of a dog, than his hate (8).”

In the tenth century several bards have had their observations on life preserved to us.

Hast thou heard the saying of Myvenydd,

A bard with a genius fond of books,

“ There is no good governor but God (9).”

(6) See before, p. 38.

(7) A glyweisti gwedyl Cynllwg,
Vardd llwyd, llydan ei olwg :
“ Cawas dda ni cawas ddrwg.”

Ibid.

(8) A glyweisti gwedyl y Bardd Glas,
Yn rhoi cyhghor cyweithas :
“ Gwell cariad y ci noi gas.”

Ibid.

(9) A glyweisti gwedyl Myvenydd,
Bardd llyvreugar ei wenydd :
“ Namyn Duw nid madlywydd.”

Ibid.

Hast

Haft thou heard the faying of Divwg,
The bard of old Morgan Morganwg :
“ Who feeks not good, may expect evil (10).”

Didft thou hear the faying of Idwallon,
A hoary old man, refting on his ftaff :
“ With the ignorant hold no difpute (11).”

3. Nothing is more remarkable and often more lamentable in literary history, than the apparent capricioufnefs with which the ravages of time appear to have been exerted on ancient MSS. Many valuable works have perifhed, and fome worthlefs ones have efcaped. The books of fome periods and of fome countries have difappeared and others have furvived, without any adequate reason for either event. No argument can therefore have lefs force than this. We may as well interrogate Time, why his production of human genius is fo irregular as to exact critical demonftration, why his ravages upon its labours have been fo inconfant and partial.

(10) A glyweifti gwedyl Divwg,
Bardd hên Vorgan Morganwg :
“ Na çais y da, aroed y drwg.”

Ibid.

(11) Cambrian Biography, p. 195.

In every country this partial destruction of literature is apparent. What a chasm exists in the works of Grecian genius before Homer and after him. Such a perfect exhibition of human talent, must have been preceded by many productions of the poetic art. But where are they? and what has become of the works which followed? Homer stands sublime, like a towering island in an expansive ocean. Hesiod is a little islet near him, but there is scarce any thing else to connect him with his ancestors or successors. But because Homer and Hesiod shone in one age, and Eschylus, Sophocles, and Pindar, in a later period, we are not so unjust as to brand the Iliad of the one, or the works and days of the others as surreptitious productions. In Judea, David, Solomon, and Isaiah, shone with excelling merit. But what a darkness between Solomon and Isaiah? Another interval of gloom succeeded, and the author of Ecclesiasticus appeared. After another interruption, came Josephus and Philo, and what a Cimmerian midnight since!

Where

Where are the historians and poets of Phenicia, Carthage, and Egypt? We know that many existed and wrote; we know that two of these nations were the tutors of Greece, and the other the competitor of Rome; and yet all their literary compositions, however curious, or however meritorious, have passed away from human knowledge, like the clouds which dropped their treasures on their fields; like the myriads of population, which swarmed in their cities and established their fame.

We have the Frankish poetry of Otfrid in 850, and we scarcely knew the names of any other Frankish poets, who came after him in the centuries immediately following. Shall he be, therefore, discredited? What chasms exist in the literature of Persia, Arabia, and Hindustan?

The ebbs and flows of intellect and literature in every nation appear very capricious, and obey no fixed rules.

Our own country has abounded with these vicissitudes. While the Romans were with us, the national mind must have been ameliorated.

The Saxons came and mental darkness followed. The sun of intellect streaked the gloom with its orient rays, and Bede, Alcuin, and others adorned the Saxon name. The furies of the North shrouded the hemisphere with their tempests, and priests even forgot to read their services. ALFRED reigned, and the glorious beam burst through the stormy cloud, called forth by his magic voice, and irradiating his paths. A premature evening succeeded; the faint light which glimmered afterwards soon disappeared in the Norman midnight. But the dawn of reason again returned; it struggled with the interposing clouds; it increased; it diminished; it burst forth at last with new fervor, and a settled radiance has now spread around, which every century augments, and which the course of nature promises to perpetuate.

The same accidents have occurred to the British poetry. The Druids had, as Cæsar attests, a great quantity of verses, and of course had poets, whose names and productions have perished for ever. Of all those who were afterwards distinguished, during the Roman residence,

dence, little else than a few names remain. In the sixth century, some poets of eminent genius shone, whose works have come down to us. Of those who flourished in the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, we know little, and have very few remains; yet, we can ascertain, that bards then both lived and sang. At last, in the twelfth century, the genius of Welsh poetry broke out in new lustre, which increased through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But, for the last two ages, what has become of it? Another chasm has taken place, like that between the sixth and the twelfth, of which we are living witnesses.

To complete the argument which I stated, that I should use in behalf of these poems; there remains only to shew, that the forgery could not have been practised without detection; that there is nothing extraordinary in these poems being genuine; that they are attested by a stream of national belief, and that any scepticism about them has been of recent origin.

Of these four points, the two last are so notorious,

torious, that I shall only assert them without the fear of contradiction ; very little need be added on the others. Whoever considers the nature of the bardic system ; that no one was admitted to be a bard but after a regular initiation and tuition, and that so many bards, in every age, existed competitors for fame and distinction, must perceive that so much poetry, as to occupy 580 pages of double columns, could not be forged without speedy detection.

We have proved by undeniable evidence and reasoning, that the Welsh had bards in the sixth century, and in particular, these individual bards. Is it then, any thing extraordinary, that poets should write poetry ; and, if poetry was written, is it a miracle that part of it should descend to us ? Let us recollect, that the insignificant tract of Gildas has survived, and let us cease to be surprised that a nation, fond of its bards, should preserve some of their compositions.

I have now closed an argument which I should not have prosecuted for the purpose of
personal

personal vindication *. This feeling has indeed had some effect in reconciling me to the labour, which the task has occasioned, but if I had not thought the subject an interesting part in the history of the British literature, I should not have suffered it to occupy any portion of that leisure which I am already pledged to employ on a more important topic. This tract has inevitably suspended my attention to the last volume of my Anglo-Saxon History; and must be my apology if I shall be thought to have delayed its appearance. But no other subject will now interfere to prevent me from completing that engagement to the public which, by the preceding volumes of the history I consider myself to have contracted.

* I decline the odious task of pointing out the Critical Reviewer's mistakes in his critique on my history. A reviewer is a chartered libertine, and cannot be expected to be infallible; therefore, unless the impugning criticism concerns a point of real importance in literature, I shall at no time be so captious as to notice it. To the charge of faults in the style, I plead guilty, and hope that this treatise will exhibit some reformation.

A P P E N D I X.

THE Preiddew Annwn is one of the poems ascribed to Taliesin in the old Welsh MSS. As it is so unintelligible in parts, it may be not amiss to state all I have been able to collect about the persons and allusions contained in it.

L. 3. Gwair.—This person and incident are mentioned in the historical triads. He is there called the son of Geirion, and lord of Geirionydd, and by the command of the people, he and his family were put into the prison of Oeth and Anoeth, Welsh MSS. v. 2. p. 68.

L. 3. Caer Sidi.—Though Caer means city, yet its more primitive signification is circle. It is a word frequently applied to express the constellations. Thus Caer Arianrod is the Northern Crown, or literally the circle of the silver wheel.

Taliesin in his Hanes alludes to it :

Mi a fum dri chy farod
Ynghaer Arianrod. p. 29.
I have been three seasons
In Caer Arianhod.

So

So *Caer Gwdion* is the Galaxy; and so the common saying in Wales, for the fun being set, is *Maeyr haul tan eigaerau*; or, the fun is under the *Caers*, or circles. In a passage in *Taliesin's Hanes*, *Caer Sidi* is also mentioned:

*Mi a fum ynghadair fin
Urwch Caer Sidin
A honno yn troi fydd
Rhwyng tri elfydd
Pand rhyfedd ir byd
Nas argenydd*

I have been in the chair of the boundary,
Above *Caer Sidi*.
This is revolving
Between three elements.
Is it not wonderful to the world
That it has not been sung of? p. 20.

L. 4. *Pwyll* and *Pryderi*.

According to the *Mabinogion*, or old Welsh romances, *Pwyll* was the father of *Pryderi*. The first *Mabinogi* is about *Pwyll*, and the chief part of it may be seen in the *Cambrian Registers* for 1795, 1796. The tale is in substance this. *Pwyll*, the chief of *Dimetia*, met in hunting, a stranger who announced himself to be *Arawn*, (silver-tongued,) king of *Annwn*, and who complained that another king of *Annwn*, *Havgan*, (summer-brightness,) warred

warred upon him. Pwyll killed this Havgan, and reigning a year in Annwn, was thence stiled Pen Annwn, the chief of Annwn.—Pryderi was the son of Pwyll, and is mentioned in another Mabinogi. It is curious that Dimetia is often called, Gwlad yr hud, the country of enchantment.

Pryderi and Caer Sidi are mentioned in another poem ascribed to Taliesin, thus

Complete was my chair in Caer Sidi
 Neither disorder nor age will oppress me in it,
 This is known to Manawydd and Pryderi.
 Three exclamations round the fire will be uttered before it,
 And round its borders the streams of the torrents.

Cerdd meib Llyr. 67.

Manawydd is the hero of the third tale of the Mabinogion and his brother Bran also, mentioned in the above cited poem, and who was the father of Caractacus, is the hero of the second tale.

L. 9. Pridwen.—This was the name of Arthur's Shield, according to the Welsh of Jeffrey's history.

L. 12. Caer Pedryvan.—Pedryvan means four places or parts.

L. 13. Pair—The cauldron.—This was a part of the bardic mythology, which is not much under-

understood ; Taliesin twice alludes to the pair Ceridwen.

Thus,

I received my genius
From the cauldron of Ceridwen.

Mi a gefais awen
O bair Cyidwen.

Hanes, p. 20.

Is not my chair protected by the cauldron of Ceridwen
Therefore let my tongue be free.

Cerdd meib. Llyr. 66.

I have already, p. 62, cited another passage in which he mentions Ceridwen.

The second of the Mabinogion, or Welsh Tales, mentions a magic cauldron, which had the power of giving life, Bran, king of Britain, gave Matholwc the sovereign of Ireland, a magic cauldron which had this virtue, that if a person slain was thrown into it, he recovered his life and vigour but lost his utterance. Matholwc married Bran's daughter, but ill using her, Bran invaded Ireland. In the battle, as fast as the Irish fell, they were brought to life by being thrown into the cauldron, till Evnyfion, or the evil minded one, being thrown in, he stretched himself and broke it to pieces. The idea of this magic cauldron may

may have been borrowed from the mythology of the cauldron of Ceridwen.

In this poem, Taliesin, after mentioning his own presence in the incidents alluded to, adds, several times, that only seven returned from the places he mentioned. The above tale lends a small ray of light to this topic; for, in its account of the termination of Bran's expedition, it states, that all the Britons were slain in it except seven, who were Pryderi, Manawydan, Glinau ail Taran, Taliesin, Unawg, Grudien, son of Mwriel, and Heilyn, son of Gwyn the aged.

The poem of Taliesin, on the whole, was, perhaps, written on some expedition of Arthur, in which Taliesin was present, and Sidi, Mid-iwid, Rigor, Coludd, Mandwy, and Ochren, were the places that were visited in the course of it; but the incidents are so imperfectly alluded to, that they cannot be understood.

F I N I S.



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TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

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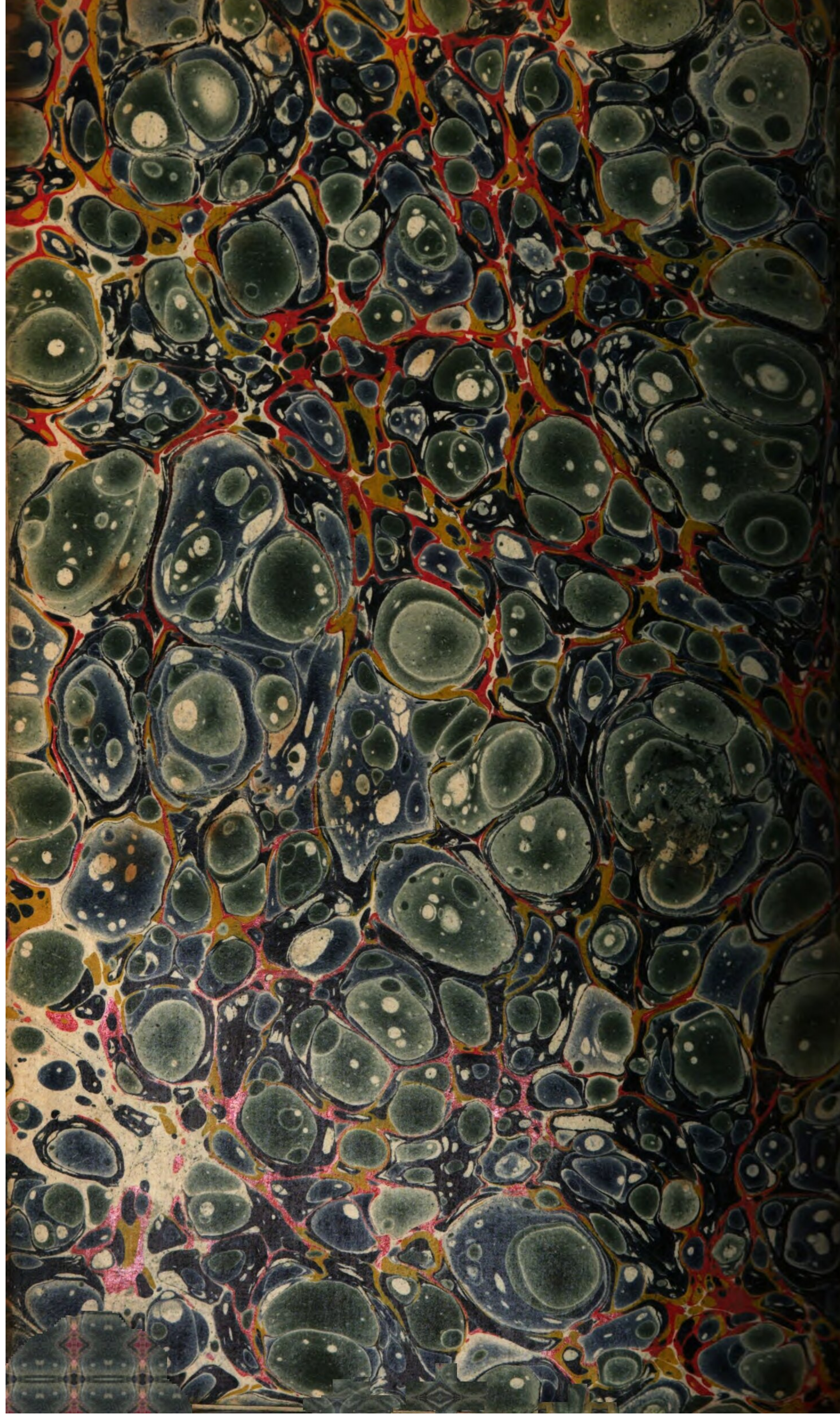
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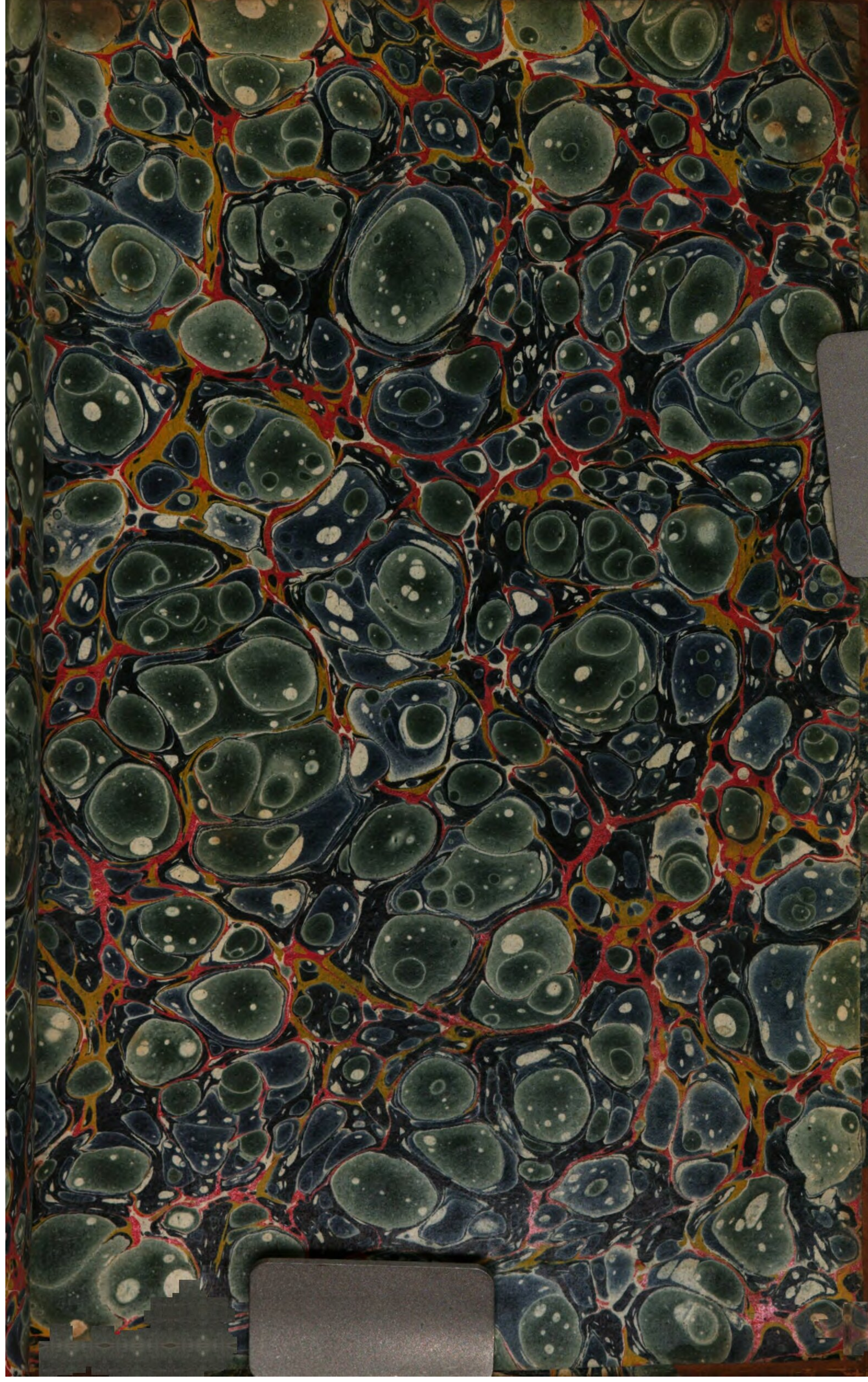
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